



THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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No. 58.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 7, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

THE LIBERTY BOYS' DESPERATE CHARGE! OR, WITH "MAD ANTHONY" AT STONY POINT. By HARRY MOORE.



It was a desperate charge, indeed, and Dick led his "Liberty Boys" in the rush up the hill, while just in front was "Mad Anthony," wounded and supported by two of the youths.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MAJOR AND THE MAIDEN.

It was sundown of a beautiful day in July, 1779.

A maiden of about seventeen years of age was walking briskly along the road at a point about one mile west of Haverstraw, N. Y. She was evidently a farmer's daughter, but she was, although plainly dressed, very beautiful and attractive. She had long, light-brown hair, which hung down her back in two braids, tied at the ends with bits of blue ribbon, while her eyes were blue as the skies and there was a roguish look in their depths, which showed she was a girl who loved fun and jollity. As she walked along she hummed the air of a love song, and her air was one of a girl who was perfectly happy.

Suddenly an exclamation escaped the girl's lips. "Goodness!" she murmured; "there come a couple of British soldiers! I wish that I had seen them in time to get out of their way. I don't like the redcoats at the best, and when they are at their worst they are to be avoided. I suppose I shall have to meet these, however, and I will be as brave as possible."

It was as the girl had said. A couple of British soldiers had ridden around a bend in the road, perhaps seventy-five yards in front, and were approaching at a gallop. That they had seen the girl was evident, for they were seen to speak to each other and nod toward the maiden.

They were soon at the spot where the girl stood, she having stepped out of the road to let them pass, and instead of passing and continuing on their way they paused and one, whose uniform proclaimed him to be a major, leaped to the ground and confronted the maiden.

"Which way, my pretty maid?" he asked, with a half-mocking bow.

"Can't you see?" was the prompt reply. "I am bound southward."

"Aha, so I see; you are quite a spirited little maiden, aren't you?"

"One has to have spirit when there are so many men like you in this part of the country."

"Oho, a regular little spitfire!" showing his teeth. "Really, I admire your spunk!"

"It doesn't matter to me whether you admire it or not; kindly let me pass."

But the officer shook his head. "I could not think of it," he declared; "at least not until you have paid the customary toll!"

"Paid toll?"

"Yes."

"I don't know what you mean."

"You don't?"

"I do not."

"Well, well; that is strange. Am I then the first British soldier whom you have ever encountered?"

"Oh, no; but you are the first one to say anything about toll."

"Aha, so much the better for me, then—eh, Condon?" this last to his companion, a common soldier.

"That's so, major."

"Yes, indeed! I shall have the exquisite pleasure of sipping the genuine honey from the beautiful lips of this maiden, if that is the case. I am indeed glad that the rest of the fellows have said nothing about toll."

The girl understood what was meant, but she was a brave, spirited maiden and she made up her mind that this impudent officer should not kiss her, if she could help it. Her eyes flashed and there was a look of anger and defiance on her face.

"It will not do you any good, Sir Redcoat!" declared the girl. "I have never yet paid toll for passing along these roads and I shall not begin now."

"Ah, but my dear girl, this is the king's highway and I am the representative of the king and have a right to collect the toll, so——"

"This is not the king's highway!" interrupted the girl. "It is a free road for a free and independent people, and no representative of a king has more right on the road than any one else."

"So that's the way you look at it, is it?"

"It is."

"Well, it grieves me to have to differ with you, but I think you are wrong. This is the king's highway, I am

his representative, have the right to collect toll, and am going to exercise the right; you must give me a few kisses, my pretty maid!"

"Never!" the girl spoke in a firm, ringing voice, and her eyes fairly flashed as they met the gaze of the officer unflinchingly.

"Jove! but I like you better and better!" the major cried. "Say, but isn't she handsome when her mad is up, eh, Condon?"

"Pretty as a peach, major."

"Lovely—exquisite! You are entrancing, my little sweetheart, and I must have some kisses from those sweet lips of yours. Why, I would risk death to secure a few such favors!" and the officer took a couple of steps forward as if to put his words into effect, but stopped suddenly and a curse escaped him as he found himself staring into the muzzle of a small pistol which the girl had quickly drawn from the bosom of her dress and poked it almost against the end of the major's nose.

"You will be risking death if you try to take any liberties with me, Sir Redcoat!" was the ringing cry of the girl. Her voice trembled slightly, but it was with excitement and not from fear.

As for the major and his comrade, they stared at the girl in open-mouthed amazement. On the face of the officer was a look of consternation—almost fear, indeed, as well. In truth, it may be safely set down that he was frightened, for a man who will insult or try to intimidate a woman is always a coward. He began to bluster, however.

"Why, what do you mean, you impudent hussy?" he cried. "What do you mean by drawing a weapon on me, an officer in the service of the king?"

"I mean to protect myself from insult from you, or from any one else, no matter whom!" was the determined reply. "The fact that you are an officer in the service of a tyrant king does not give you any more rights than any one else possesses, or make you any the less a coward and scoundrel—which you undoubtedly are, or you would not attempt to take advantage of an unprotected girl as you are doing!"

The major's face turned red, then almost purple, so great was his anger. To be talked to thus by a mere girl was very humiliating, he thought; all the more so on account of the fact that there was one of his men present to hear it all.

"Drop that pistol!" he roared.

The girl made no motion to obey.

"Drop that pistol, I say!" The captain stamped his foot and glared fiercely.

A scornful curl of the lip was the girl's only answer, and the hand that held the pistol did not waver. The dark muzzle of the weapon continued to stare the major in the face.

"Are you going to drop that pistol?" again roared the major.

"I am not!" was the prompt reply. "I shall hold it till you remount and continue on your way."

"But I am not going to remount and continue on my way until after I have had those kisses—do you hear?"

"Yes; but if you try to get the kisses you will get a bullet right between those villainous eyes of yours—do you hear?" was the determined reply.

The major hardly knew what to say or do. He had never met such a girl as this one since coming to America, and there was something in her eyes that said "shoot!" as plainly as words could have done, and he feared to make a forward movement. He was a man who was obstinate and set in his ways, however, and he was far from being willing to give up and let the girl triumph over him. That would never do at all, he thought. His man would tell the others, and the story would get to the officers and they would make life a burden to him. No, he must outwit the girl in some way. But how? That was the question, and his mind was actively at work on the problem while he stood there glaring alternately into the frowning muzzle of the pistol and the threatening blue eyes of the pistol's owner.

It was a tableau worthy the brush of an artist, but there was no artist there to paint it. The trooper, sitting on his horse surveying the scene, thought that he had never seen a more interesting one. He was not the best man in the world, but he could not help admiring the courage and spirit of the country maiden.

"Jove!" he thought; "the major has caught a Tartar, if ever any one did! That girl will shoot, or I'm no judge of the light in a person's eye."

The major was thinking rapidly, but could think of nothing he could do to cause the girl to put down the pistol, so he decided upon the bold expedient of risking a shot. He did not think the girl could be expert in the use of the weapon, so he suddenly leaped forward and attempted to strike the muzzle of the pistol up. He did not succeed in this, but touched the muzzle and caused it to be turned just enough to one side so that the bullet—the girl firing the instant she saw the officer was going to try to disarm her—struck him in the fleshy part of the left arm, instead of in the body.

A roar of rage and pain escaped the major's lips as he

felt the burning sensation caused by the bullet, and then with an added cry of fierce satisfaction he seized the brave girl in his arms.

"I told you I would risk life to secure those kisses!" he said, "and now that I have gone to such trouble I am going to have a plenty. You would have done better not to have resisted!"

"Unhand me!" cried the girl, struggling with all her might. "You shall not kiss me—coward, villain that you are! Unhand me! Help! Help!"

The last two words she screamed out at the top of her voice, and to her joy, and the discomfiture of the two redcoats, there came an answering cry, in a cheery, masculine voice.

"Coming!" cried the voice. "I'll be there in just a moment, young lady!"

The sound of hoofbeats was heard and around a bend, fifty yards to the northward, dashed a horseman.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAJOR'S DISCOMFITURE.

The newcomer dashed right up to the spot and came to a sudden stop, while his eyes took in the situation. He was a young fellow of perhaps twenty or thereabouts, and he was as handsome a youth as one would wish to see. He was well built, muscular and athletic-looking, and he had a strong face and keen, clear, blue-gray eyes, in which the glint of danger could be made appear at the least provocation. One swift, sweeping glance, and then a pair of pistols appeared in his hands as if by magic. One was leveled at the major while the other covered his comrade.

"Unhand that lady!" came the command, in ringing tones.

The major, who had stood as if rooted to the spot while the newcomer was approaching, hastened to obey. He was now in a terrible state of mind. He had been defied and held at bay for quite a while by the saucy girl and had even been wounded by a bullet from her pistol and now, just as he was on the point of reaping the reward for his tribulations he was to be balked again. It was simply unbearable, and he gave utterance to a fierce curse and glared at the young man with the look of a demon.

"Who are you, and by what right do you interfere?" he cried, hoarsely. He was so mad that he was almost to the choking point.

"It is sufficient to say that I am a man," was the calm reply; "and I interfere because I see a scoundrel laying violent hands on a woman!"

"She is a tigress! She shot me in the arm."

"Without knowing the facts in the case I would be willing to stake my life that you needed all you got and more!" was the prompt reply.

"He wished to kiss me, kind sir," said the girl; "he said that I must pay toll on the king's highway to him on account of his being a soldier of the king."

"And when he attempted to take the kisses you shot him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bravo! you are a brave and true-hearted girl. You served the scoundrel just right, miss—only the bullet should have taken effect in his black heart, instead of in his arm."

"What's that!" fumed the major. "Do you dare call me a scoundrel, you——"

The newcomer shook his pistol threateningly and caused the officer to break the thread of his discourse, rather abruptly. "Don't say anything harsh," was the calm, warning remark of the young man; "I am naturally a little bit touchy and hot-tempered, and am sometimes unreasonable enough to get angry when one speaks to me harshly. At such times I am apt to do something which the other fellow will not like, and it is possible that I might let drive at that spot between your eyes. If I did so it would be bad for you, for I am not a weak girl, but am a man and a dead shot. Just keep cool and go slow, my friend!"

"Good! good!" cried the girl, clapping her hands. "How do you like that, you redcoated coward? Don't you wish you had gone on about your business and not bothered me?"

A hoarse growl escaped the lips of the major. He was almost beside himself with rage, but he did not know what to do. "Kill the scoundrel, Condon!" he presently cried. "Shoot him—cut him down!"

"Don't try any tricks, Condon," said the young man, calmly; "if you do I shall be compelled to put a bullet into you where it will do the most good. Just keep your hands down and take things easy."

The trooper did not manifest any particular desire to obey the command of his superior officer. He was smart enough to know that it would be as much as his life was worth if he were to try to draw a weapon. He was a good judge of people, and he had sized the newcomer up as being a dangerous customer. "Another Tartar, and a worse one than the girl," was his thought after a brief

survey; "I guess the major would have made money by letting that girl alone."

The major, seeing that his man was not going to try to do anything, was at a loss what to do. There he was, at bay, powerless to do anything, and the girl whom he had set his heart on kissing was standing there actually laughing at him and enjoying his discomfiture. It was terribly galling, and the officer felt that he would give a great deal to be able to dispose of this champion and carry out his original plan of taking some kisses.

Suddenly a thought struck him: Why not challenge the young man to a duel? He was considered the crack swordsman of his regiment; why not get the young stranger to meet him in a duel with swords and then cut him to pieces? It was the very thing he would like to do, but could he bring it about? He did not know, but was determined to try.

"See here," he said, in as dignified a manner as it was possible to assume under the circumstances, "I am a gentleman and——"

"You don't look it!" interrupted the young man.

"And he hasn't acted it!" from the girl.

"They've got the major there!" thought the trooper, with a covert grin.

"I am a gentleman," reiterated the major; "and as an officer in the king's service I insist on your giving me the satisfaction which one gentleman should accord another when insult has been given. I demand that you meet me in a sword duel!"

"You 'demand' it, eh?"

"Yes, I do."

"Humph! I don't see that you are in a position to demand much of anything, just at present, my redcoat friend."

"Nevertheless I demand a meeting; and unless you consent to meet me I shall brand you a coward!"

"That would be awful!" in a mocking tone. "I doubt if I should survive the shame of that. But why should I meet you with swords rather than pistols?"

"Swords are the weapons of gentlemen."

"Oh, that's it?"

"Yes."

"Pistols are not the weapons of gentlemen, then?"

"No; they are vulgar."

"But handy things to have around when a 'gentleman' acts in an ungentlemanly manner, you will admit. They are effective in making him behave himself."

"Bah! enough of this. Will you meet me?"

"Don't do it, sir!" cried the girl. "Don't permit him

to draw you into a duel with him. There is no reason why you should do so. He is a scoundrel and has no claim to the title of gentleman, and you would not gain anything by meeting him and would, at the same time, run the risk of losing your life. Please don't do it!"

"How interested you have become in the young man!" sneered the major; "I suppose you have fallen in love with him and that the kisses which you denied me will be showered upon him in profusion!" There was anger and jealousy in the officer's tone; the truth was, that he thought himself a lady-killer and to have the girl refuse him the kisses had hurt his vanity greatly in the first place, and now to have her show such interest in the handsome young stranger was very galling to him.

"That will do!" cried the young man, a glint of anger appearing in his eyes; "if you speak in that manner again I shall put a bullet through your head and stop that tongue of yours for good and all. I don't like redcoats very well, anyway!"

"Aha! you are a cursed rebel, then, as I suspected from the first!" cried the major.

"I do not know what you mean when you speak of 'rebels,'" said the young man, quietly; "what sort of people are they?"

"Bah! you know very well. I mean those who are rebelling against their just and rightful king."

"Oh, you mean the people who are fighting for their independence."

"Yes; they are rebels!"

"They are not rebels!" was the prompt reply; "they are honest, honorable and brave men who are fighting for their liberty. The king you speak of has never been in America, and knows nothing of us and cares less. All he wants is to wring the gold out of us that we have earned by the sweat of our bows. He is a tyrant and has no right to rule over us."

"Glorious!" cried the girl; "that is the truth—every word of it!"

"You are a cursed rebel!" cried the officer, red with rage; "I dare you to meet me, man to man and sword to sword!"

"Do you really mean it?" the young man asked.

"Yes, I do. You dare not meet me!"

"You think not?" sarcastically.

"I am sure of it."

"Well, I will prove to you that you don't know as much as you think you do, my bold British friend. I will meet you, man to—scoundrel! and sword to sword."

A hoarse growl of rage escaped the major. He did not

relish being talked to in such fashion by the young stranger. He did not say much, however, for fear his intended victim might change his mind. "Just dismount and get ready," he remarked, savagely; "I will soon show you a trick or two that you know nothing about!"

"You are no doubt tricky enough," was the cool reply; "but I don't think you can teach me anything I do not already know. You see, I have come in contact with a number of the scoundrelly minions of the tyrant, King George, and I have learned their tricks by heart."

"Oh, sir, if you enter into a combat with him, his comrade will cut you down when you are not looking!" the girl cried. "I would not do it if I were you. Your life is worth those of a hundred such as they, for you are a true-hearted man, while they are but cowardly curs!"

The girl's words stung the major to the quick, and he gave utterance to a fierce exclamation of anger. "I'll make you pay for your insolence later on, girl though you are!" he cried.

"Listen to the threats of the coward!" said the girl. "Don't fight a duel with him, sir; please don't!"

"It is because of his threats and cowardly conduct as a whole that I have decided to meet him," was the reply; "he needs a lesson so bad that I cannot refrain from giving it to him. But I hardly know what to do about this other fellow here. I am well enough acquainted with the tribe to which they both belong, so that I do not feel disposed to take any chances; I——"

"I'll tell you what you do," cried the girl, her face lighting up; "since you are bent on meeting this—this coward, why, give me your pistols and I will see to it that the other does not attack you."

"Bravo!" the young man cried; "you are the kind of a girl I like!" The girl's face flushed and a pleased light glowed in her eyes. "I shall feel perfectly safe to leave this fellow in your care." If he makes a move toward attacking me, shoot him."

The young man leaped to the ground and stepping to the girl's side handed her the pistols. Then he quickly drew his sword, and, confronting Major Marcy, said: "Draw and defend yourself, you scoundrel!"

CHAPTER III.

"MY NAME IS DICK SLATER, MISS."

The major drew his sword, with a muttered curse, and leaping forward made a savage thrust at the young man's

breast. The thrust was parried with the utmost ease, and the other's sword made a quick, flashing stroke and cut a gash in the officer's cheek.

"Just to let you know that you will have to exercise more caution," the young man said, coolly. "You are not dealing with a girl, major!"

The officer gave utterance to an oath and would have followed it with others but the young man attacked him with such fury that he had to stop talking and attend to business.

"Remember that there is a lady present, major," said the youth; "or, if you will not remember it, I shall try to keep you so busily employed as to leave you no time for remarks."

"He's a cool one!" thought the trooper who was watching the combat with eager interest; "and he's a good swordsman, too. I'm afraid the major is going to get badly left all around, this time."

Clash! clash! went the weapons, and as it was now coming dusk the sparks flew from the high-tempered blades. It was cut and thrust and parry, and clash, clash! for a good minute, at least, the major doing his best to find an opening only to find himself foiled at every point. His adversary was as good a swordsman as himself, and he was even cooler and more self-possessed. The blood which had trickled down the major's face from the wound in the cheek did not improve his appearance. Indeed, to tell the truth he looked like a demon, for there was a red light in his eyes that told how fiercely he hated his opponent and how anxious he was to run him through.

The girl, although keeping her attention for the most part on the trooper, whom she held covered with the pistols, could not withstand the temptation to glance at the combatants occasionally. She had feared that the handsome young stranger might not be anywhere the match for the arrogant and vicious British officer, but she was reassured when she saw that he was the equal of the redcoat as a swordsman.

"Oh, I am so glad!" she said to herself; "it would be terrible if that fiendish redcoat should kill him—and then I should be at his mercy—ugh! But no," as she thought of the weapons which she held in her hands, "if he kills that brave and noble young man I will shoot him dead the next instant, just as sure as my name is Lucy Logan!" and her teeth came together in a manner which showed she meant this. Had the major but known it, he was between two fires—indeed, he was in more danger from the girl than from the young man, for the latter had no intention of killing him.

"Oh, but I'll spit you sooner or later!" presently cried the major after several failures to penetrate the other's guard; "you are as good as dead and buried, you rebel hound!"

"You are a liar, you redcoat cur!" was the calm retort; and then the young man went on: "Let me see, I judge that you imagine yourself to be quite a lady-killer—that you take great pride in what you imagine to be a handsome face, is it not so?"

"What is that to you?" fiercely.

"Just this: Such men are dangerous, and are, in fact, the greatest of great nuisances; so I think I shall have to spoil your looks a bit and make you less dangerous. I have already pinked you on one cheek, and that will make a scar; so to balance up I shall now pink you on the other side of the face."

The young man spoke calmly and judiciously, and then as he finished, put his words into execution and cut a gash an inch and a half long in the major's other cheek.

Again the officer started out to utter a string of curses, and again the youth attacked him with such fury as to force him to stop and give all his attention to defending himself. "You know, I warned you a while ago to remember that there is a lady present," said the youth, coolly; "don't forget it again or I shall forget my intention to only disable and not kill you, and run my sword clear down your throat!"

"Blazes! what a fellow that is!" thought the trooper, eyeing the young American admiringly, in spite of his desire not to do so; "he is the coolest chap I ever saw, and that is saying a good deal. I pity the major!"

The fight was fast and furious, now, for a few moments, and then the young man's sword, after a series of bewildering motions, made a lightning-like sweep through the air and the end of Major Marcy's right ear dropped to the ground, cut off, slick and clean, by the sword of his skillful opponent.

"I always mark my men by cutting off a bit of their right ear," said the young fellow, with the utmost coolness and sang froid; "that is so that I shall know them when I meet them again. It is too much trouble to try to remember faces, and by marking them it is easy to identify them."

The major had been rendered dumb, so great was his rage when he felt the blade sever his ear, but recovering the use of his tongue he hoarsely cried: "I'll have your life for that, you hound, just so sure as my name is Marcy! I'll have your heart's blood—I swear it!"

"If you swear you won't catch any fish, major," was

the imperturbable reply; "and, besides, you shouldn't wish for such expensive luxuries as the heart's blood of any one. Be more moderate in your tastes and desires and you will the more likely be able to have them gratified."

"But I shall have your heart's blood, you dog! I shall make it my business to hunt you to your death! I shall——"

The major suddenly stopped telling what he would do, for the reason that the youth had, by a dexterous movement, cut off a bit from the top of his left ear. "I don't usually mark a man on both sides," said the calm voice of the wonderful young stranger, "but really you are such a rabid cur that I think you should receive a little more attention than I am in the habit of giving to men of your kidney. There—take that also with my compliment!" as he gave the major a slash across the temple. "I really think that by the time I get through with you, scarcely any girl, no matter how homely and foolish she may be, will care to fall in love with you!"

At last the major realized that he was as an amateur in the hands of the wonderful young swordsman. He was a mere tyro as compared with his opponent. He began to see that the other could, if he chose, kill him at any moment, and feeling that he would have his good looks ruined forever if he prolonged the combat, he decided to quit.

"Enough!" he called out, his voice almost choking with rage and mortification; "I am wounded in a number of places and do not care to continue."

"You have enough, eh?"

"Yes; for the present. I will meet you again, however, and then look out!"

"Oh, I always look out for myself," was the careless reply; "when there are curs around I generally keep a watch behind me."

The major was turning away, having stepped back and replaced his sword in the scabbard, and he did not vouchsafe a reply to this thrust until after he had mounted his horse and was ready to go, and then he shook his fist at the handsome youth and said, viciously: "We shall meet again, and then—beware! It will be your life or mine!"

"Good evening, major," was the calm and unruffled reply; "I shall be sorry to have to kill you, but if you force me to do it, it will not be my fault, you know."

A muttered curse escaped the lips of the officer and with a "Come, Condon," he rode away up the road at a furious pace, the other keeping close behind him.

"You have made a dangerous enemy, sir," said Lucy Logan, as the two disappeared around the bend in the road.

"All redcoats are enemies, miss," was the calm reply;

"and I believe I can truthfully say that the enmity of such a fellow as that one does not worry me in the least."

"You are a brave man!" cried the girl, impulsively; "you are as different from that man as is day from night. He is the kind of man that girls hate; while you are the kind that girls——"

"What?" with a smile.

"Love!" was the reply, but with a becoming blush. "I think it, so why not say it?" she said, with a little laugh, her voice trembling. Then she went on, rapidly. "You saved me from insult at the hands of that terrible man, and I thank you, and——"

"There, there; don't say another word," smiled the young man. "I was only too glad of a chance to do what I did, so you owe me nothing."

"Oh, but I can't look at it that way; I do owe you a great deal and I wish you would come home with me and let my parents thank you."

"I might go home with you, but not to receive the thanks of your parents; a supper and night's lodging would about fill the bill, I think."

"Oh, we shall be so glad to have you stay as long as you care to, Mr.—Mr.——"

"My name is Dick Slater, miss."

CHAPTER IV.

"OPEN IN THE NAME OF THE KING!"

The girl uttered an exclamation of surprise. "Did you say 'Dick Slater?'" she asked, eagerly.

"Yes, miss; that is my name."

"And are you—can it be possible that you are—the great patriot scout, spy and captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76,' of whom we have heard so much?"

"I am Dick Slater, the captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76,'" with a smile; "but if I may ask, what is your name, miss?"

"Lucy Logan."

"I am glad to make your acquaintance, Miss Logan, for I honestly believe that you are the bravest girl I have ever seen. It was beautiful the way you held the British trooper at your mercy while I was engaged with the major."

The girl blushed with pleasure. "You must not flatter me," she murmured.

"Oh, there is no flattery about it, Miss Logan, and——"

"Oh, please do not call me 'Miss Logan'! Call me Lucy."

"If you will call me Dick."

"It is a bargain," with a bright smile; "but come, we must be going or my folks will become uneasy and send out in search of me. Then, too, it is about supper-time."

"So it is. But how far is it to your home, Lucy?"

"Oh, only a little ways; scarcely half a mile."

"That is good; well, I am ready."

Dick Slater slipped the bridle rein from over the head of his horse and sticking his arm through it, walked along beside the girl, the horse walking along behind them, seemingly perfectly satisfied with the situation.

Lucy's home was soon reached and as she had said, they were just beginning to be alarmed by her continued absence. "What kept you so late, Lucy?" her mother asked, she and her husband having come out upon the piazza as the two approached.

"I will explain in a minute, mother," was the reply; "first let me introduce to you and father Mr. Slater; Mr. Dick Slater, the patriot scout, spy and captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76.' Dick, my father and mother."

The young man acknowledged the introduction with a smile, and a few well-chosen words, but the girl's parents, now that they knew who Lucy's companion was, were profuse in their greetings. They shook hands with him and told him he was more than welcome. "We have heard a great deal about you and your brave 'Liberty Boys,'" said Mr. Logan; "and we have often wished that we might see and know you. We are glad that the privilege has been given us!"

"Yes, indeed!" from Mrs. Logan.

Then Lucy told of her meeting with the two British soldiers, and how the major had tried to kiss her and how Dick had come along and put a stop to the affair and had fought a duel with the officer and vanquished him, while she held the other redcoat at bay with a pair of pistols. She told the story in a dramatic, excited manner, and her parents were thrilled. When they had heard the story they turned again to Dick and thanked him earnestly for what he had done for their daughter.

"You have placed us deeply in your debt, Mr. Slater," said Mr. Logan; "we shall not forget what you have done, and if the opportunity should present itself we shall be only too glad to do something to in a measure discharge our obligations."

"Yes, indeed!" from Mrs. Logan. "Just to think that you were in such danger, Lucy! Oh, those terrible, terrible redcoats! How I long for the day when this cruel war

shall end, and we shall be declared free and independent!"

"No thanks are necessary," Dick hastened to say; "I am a patriot soldier and am at war with all representatives of the king, and am only too glad of a chance to strike any of them a blow. If anything, I am indebted to your daughter for affording me the opportunity."

"Mr. Slater has consented to partake of our hospitality, though, father and mother," said Lucy.

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Logan; "we shall be only too glad to have you remain with us, Mr. Slater, for as long a time as you care to stay."

"Yes, yes; you are more than welcome!" added Mrs. Logan.

"Walk in, walk in!" invited Mr. Logan; "I will take your horse to the stable and feed him. Walk in."

Dick handed the bridle rein to the man of the house and entered in company with Mrs. Logan and Lucy, who at once began to do their best to make their visitor feel at home. Presently Mr. Logan returned from the stable and then he took his wife's place, while she went into the kitchen and began preparing the evening meal. Knowing that the Logans were true-hearted patriots and that he would be safe in doing so, Dick told them what his business down in that part of the country was.

"I have been sent down from West Point, where I have been for a short time, for the purpose of spying around in the vicinity of Stony Point," said Dick; "it is desired by the commander-in-chief that Stony Point be captured, and I am to find out all I can about the approaches, defenses, number of men in the garrison and so forth."

"Ah, so that is why you are in this part of the country?" remarked Mr. Logan.

"Yes."

"I should think it would be very dangerous work!" said Lucy.

"Oh, it is dangerous work," agreed Dick; "but there is danger in everything, now."

"True."

"If it would be agreeable, I would like to take up my quarters here while in this part of the country; I wish to be located somewhere in the vicinity of Stony Point, but not too close."

"You are welcome; nay, we insist that you remain here while in this part of the country," said Mr. Logan. "We shall esteem it an honor to have you with us."

Lucy said nothing, but she gave Dick a look which said as plainly as words could have done that she would be glad to have him remain there.

"Thank you," said Dick to Mr. Logan; "you are very kind, and I shall avail myself of your kind invitation."

Supper was announced a few moments later and they went in and seated themselves at the table.

Mrs. Logan was a good cook and had gotten up a meal that was very enjoyable, especially so to Dick, whose camp life for the past three years had caused him to become accustomed to rough and coarse fare, and lots of time not half enough. As may be supposed, then, the fresh bread, the meat and gravy, the hot coffee with rich cream in it, and the number of other things that graced the table were a treat to the youth.

"I don't know when I have enjoyed a meal as I have this one," said Dick, when he had eaten his fill; "we don't have such cooks in the army, Mrs. Logan."

"No, I suppose not," replied Mrs. Logan, smiling; "men are not noted for such work."

Mr. Logan and Dick returned to the big sitting-room, leaving Mrs. Logan and Lucy to wash the dishes, and were sitting there, talking, when they were startled by hearing the trampling of horses' feet outside.

"Who can that be?" exclaimed Mr. Logan, leaping up; "it sounds like a body of horsemen!"

"I don't know," replied Dick, also rising and placing his hand on the butt of a pistol.

Then there came the sound of hurried footsteps on the piazza, followed by a loud rapping on the door.

"Open in the name of the king!" cried a fierce, imperious voice which Dick recognized at once.

It was that of the British officer with whom he had fought the duel an hour before!

CHAPTER V.

THE "HOME GUARD" COMPANY.

If ever there was an angry and disgusted man it was Major Marcy as he rode up the road after his encounter with Dick Slater. He was wild with rage and breathed curses at every breath. His beauty was ruined forever, he said to himself; his face would be scarred, and, worst of all, his ears were cropped. He would be a laughing stock for his brother officers all the rest of his life. It was almost unbearable.

"Why didn't you do something, Condon?" he cried, fiercely, turning and glaring in the face of his subordinate, who was slightly behind him.

"What could I do, major?" asked Condon.

"You could have shot that scoundrel while he was engaged with me."

"And got a bullet through my head for my pains!"

"Bah! that girl couldn't have hit you."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"How about your arm? She hit you, all right!"

"But I was so close to her she couldn't miss me. She could never have hit you."

"I thought and still think differently. She would have made me the late Mr. Condon in a jiffy if I had attempted any tricks."

"Bah! you are a coward, Condon; that's all that ails you."

"Well, perhaps I'm not the bravest man in the world, but neither am I a blank fool to throw my life away."

"Well, let it go; the fact remains that I am a ruined man. Just look at my face—cut and slashed into bits, and part of each of my ears missing. Oh, but I'll have a terrible revenge on that fellow! I'll hunt him down if it takes a lifetime, and kill him as if he were a dog!"

"Well, I wish you luck; but all I have to say is, that if you will take my advice you won't do anything till you can start in with all the advantage on your side."

"That is just what I shall do!" fiercely; "I shall give him absolutely no chance whatever!"

The two rode onward for perhaps twenty minutes, and then they met a party of redcoats. The men were well known to Major Marcy, and he quickly told them his story and asked if they would go with him in search of the youth who had handled him so roughly. The soldiers said they would, and so the major and Condon turned their horses' heads in the direction from which they had just come, and rode back in the advance of the party of troopers.

"Do you know where to look for him?" asked Captain Martin, who was in command.

"No, not exactly; but the girl must live somewhere in the vicinity of the spot where we encountered her, and I have no doubt the young scoundrel will stop there for the night. We will visit house after house and search them, too, until we find the home of the girl; and this found—the rest will be easy. The rebel will be there."

"I have no doubt you are right," agreed the captain.

They rode onward for half an hour, and then came to the home of the Logans. The major, who had assumed command, ordered that the house be surrounded, and this was done. There being twenty of the troopers, this

was easily done, and it would be impossible for any one to escape without being seen.

As soon as this manœuvre had been executed, Major Marcy leaped to the ground, and, stepping upon the piazza, knocked on the door, and called out:

"Open in the name of the king!"

When the words came to their hearing, Mr. Logan and Dick looked at each other in dismay, while Mrs. Logan and Lucy came into the room in great excitement.

"What shall I do?" asked Mr. Sloan, in a whisper.

Before Dick could reply the door suddenly opened and the light from the candle revealed the mutilated face of Major Marcy. He had tried the door, and, unfortunately for those within the house, the door was not fastened and came open at a touch.

The British officer's eyes fell upon Dick and a cry of fierce joy escaped him. "Aha, we meet again!" he cried. "We meet again; and this time the advantage is on my side and not on yours! I told you we would meet again and have a settlement, but I did not expect that it would be so soon."

"Neither did I," was Dick's cool reply. "How are you feeling, major?"

"Fierce as a tiger that has smelled human blood!" was the savage reply. "Your time has come, you rebel hound!"

"Do you think so, you British cur?" was the prompt reply.

A curse escaped the lips of the major. "You are as insolent as ever," he said, hoarsely; "but it will avail you nothing, for I have twenty men here; the house is surrounded and you cannot escape."

"Who wants to escape? I'm not afraid of you and your twenty men. The redcoats are such cowards that I can put them to flight single-handed and alone!" As Dick spoke he drew his pistols and covered the major.

"What! surely you would not be insane enough to try to show fight against twenty of the king's soldiers!"

"I am just foolish enough to do that very thing, major!" was the calm reply; "and one thing you can be sure of, and that is that you, at least, will die before I do! I shall make sure of you, you cowardly scoundrel! Just give the word to your comrades to attack me if you dare!"

The officer turned pale—where his face was not covered with dry blood—and a curse escaped him. He had seen enough of the young man to know that he meant what he said, and he was afraid that if he gave the word to his comrades to enter the house and try to capture the youth, he himself would be shot down. He was in a bad pickle; he didn't know what to do.

"You had better surrender gracefully," he said, threateningly; "if you attempt resistance it will be the worse for you."

"That is my lookout, not yours."

"Surely you do not wish to die?"

"Surely you do not, either?"

Again a curse escaped the lips of the major. He realized that his life at least was at the mercy of the saucy "rebel," and it galled him terribly. He had had no thought that the young fellow would dare offer to resist, so had opened the door and appeared without hesitation. Now he realized that he had unwittingly placed his head in the lion's mouth.

"As I told you once before, major, if you swear, you won't catch any fish," said Dick, calmly; "besides, there are ladies present, so be careful!"

There was a threat in the tone and the major realized this. He almost groaned aloud and a hoarse growl escaped him. It is hard to say what the officer would ultimately have done had it been left to him, but it wasn't left to him. There suddenly came a diversion. The crack! crack! of firearms sounded on the night air, accompanied by wild yells and cries of: "Down with the minions of the king! Kill the redcoats!"

This was a surprise to Dick, and he glanced inquiringly at Mr. Logan. The major, who was watching the youth like a hawk, took advantage of the opportunity and leaped away from the doorway and ran down off the piazza and to where his horse had been standing. The animal was not there; it had taken fright and run away when the firearms began cracking.

The major realized that his men had been attacked, though by how large a force he could not tell. Judging by the noise they made he thought there must be at least fifty of them.

He stood irresolute for a few moments and then he saw a number of his men running away from the vicinity of the house; they were followed by a firing, yelling crowd, and feeling that he could do nothing, the major turned and ran toward the timber.

The quick action of Major Marcy in getting away from the doorway had taken Dick by surprise, and by the time he reached the door and looked out the redcoat was out of sight.

"Well, I will go out and mix up in this affair and maybe I will encounter the scoundrel again," thought Dick. "If I do, I shall put another mark on him and one that will make a deeper and more lasting impression than was the case with the others."

He shot down a couple of redcoats, but did not again catch sight of the major. He saw that the party that had attacked the redcoats was made up of men who were dressed in citizens' clothes, but could not make out who they were. He did not accompany them when they chased the redcoats away, but went back upon the piazza where Mr. and Mrs. Logan and Lucy stood and awaited the return of their friends.

"Who can they be?" Dick asked.

"I think I know," replied Lucy.

"Who, then?"

"I am sure they are some of the boys of the neighborhood. I heard yesterday that they were getting up a sort of company to keep a lookout for the redcoats and protect the homes of the people of the neighborhood.

"A sort of 'Home Guard' company, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am glad they got the company up for had they not come just when they did I expect that I should have fared very badly at the redcoats' hands."

"They would have killed you, sure!" declared Mr. Logan.

"I fear that such would have been the case," agreed Dick.

A few minutes passed and then the party that had put the redcoats to flight put in an appearance. The members approached the house and stepped upon the piazza, and Dick saw that they were, in the main, young fellows of about eighteen years. The majority were known to the Logans, who called them by name, and then Dick was introduced under the name of Tom Lacy, he having requested that his real name not be given as there were so many of the youths and some of them might give the secret away to a Tory or redcoat.

"Well, we licked 'em, Mr. Logan!" cried the leader of the youths, a handsome young fellow whose name was Joe Farrell; "we gave them the worst thrashing they have had in a long time, I'll warrant you."

"I'm glad you did, Joe," said Mr. Logan; "but aren't you afraid they'll come back as soon as they get over their fright?"

"No; they won't come back to-night. They may come some other night, when they have a bigger force—but they have enough for this time, I am confident."

"I hope so."

"You boys have done me a great favor in coming at the time you did," said Dick; "the redcoats were after me, and would have got me but for your timely appearance."

"How was that?" asked Joe.

Then Lucy told how she had been met on the road that

evening by a British officer and one of his men, and how the officer had tried to kiss her and had been handled roughly in a duel by Mr. "Lacy," and how the officer had returned at the head of a body of redcoats and was going to make a prisoner of the man who had defeated him, when the neighbor boys had put in an opportune appearance and forced the redcoats to take flight.

"So that's the way of it, eh?" remarked Joe, with a curious look at Dick. "And you defeated the British officer in a sword duel?" There was interest and something of surprise in the tone of the youth.

"I should say he did!" cried Lucy, before Dick could reply. "Oh, it was grand. You should have seen it, Joe!"

Dick laughed. "You should have seen the way Miss Lucy held the trooper at her mercy with my pistols," he said; "that was what was grand."

Lucy blushed. "Oh, that wasn't so much to do," she said.

"I think it was a good deal to do," said Dick; "there are not many girls who would have the courage and nerve to do such a thing."

"You are right about that," agreed Joe; "my sister Mamie would never have the nerve to do such a thing."

"You don't know that, Joe," objected Lucy; "one never knows what they can do till they try, and Mamie might surprise you if put to the test."

"Well, she might, but I doubt it."

The boys remained at Mr. Logan's for nearly half an hour, talking, and then, borrowing a lantern, they went over the ground for the purpose of seeing how many of the redcoats they had brought down. They found five dead soldiers, and, borrowing a spade, gave the bodies burial, over in the edge of the timber. This done, they took their departure.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAJOR FINDS FRIENDS.

Major Marcy was indeed disgusted when he found himself forced to flee, and discovered that his horse had run away and left him to foot it. Not liking this mode of travel, he paused within the edge of the timber and began to ponder the situation. While thus engaged he was startled by hearing the party that had put his men to flight coming back.

"They must not be allowed to see me," he thought; and then he drew farther back into the timber.

The youths passed him without suspecting his presence, and, as we have seen, made their way to the house and remained there quite a while. When they had gone, the major again thought of himself. What should he do? His men were gone, his horse had run away and left him in the lurch, he was wounded, and everything had gone against him.

Finally he set out up the road. He thought it possible he might meet some of his men coming back to see what had become of him, but in this he was disappointed. The men had evidently gone on. Doubtless they thought he had been killed and that there was no use of risking their lives by returning to look for him.

When he had walked a mile or so the major came to a house by the roadside. There was a light shining through the window which proved that the people were still up, and after hesitating a few moments the officer decided to seek shelter here for the night.

He advanced to the door and knocked. The door was opened by a man who was typical of the locality. He eyed the British officer in a wondering manner.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "You are a British officer, are you not?"

"Yes; I'm an officer in the king's army and have been unfortunate. In an encounter with some rebels I was wounded and my horse ran away and left me afoot. Are you loyal to your king?"

"I am," was the decided reply. "So you were wounded by some scoundrelly rebels, eh? Come in, come in. We will take care of you. Come in; any representative of the good King George is welcome in my humble home."

This was welcome intelligence to the major. "Thank you," he said; "I began to think all the people in this part of the country were Whigs, and it does me good to find one who is not."

"Curse the Whigs!" cried the farmer. "The majority of my neighbors are of that belief and they have given me no end of worry. They persecute me at every opportunity."

This was not true, but the man was bitter against his neighbors because they were not loyal to the king and did not care whether he told the truth or not regarding them.

The major hastened to enter and found that the family consisted of the man—whose name was Samuel Clark—his wife, Martha, and a daughter Mary and son Dan. Mary was a rather pretty girl of about seventeen years, while Dan, who looked very much like his father, was a dark-faced youth of nineteen.

Father and son were outspoken Tories, and had had

considerable trouble with their neighbors on this account, and Dan, who was not deficient in courage, had had several fights with the neighbor boys. He had come out victorious in one or two of the fights, but had, only a few days before, been given a terrible thrashing by Joe Farrell, who was a terror when he got mad. This was doubly galling to Dan on account of the fact that he was very much struck with Mamie, Joe's sister, and he feared that Joe would give him such a bad name that Mamie would not have anything more to say to him.

On the other hand, Mrs. Clark, while she said but little—in truth, she did not dare, for fear of incurring the anger of her fierce-tempered husband—secretly sympathized with the people who were fighting for their liberty and independence; in reality she was a patriot at heart, and her daughter Mary was very much like her mother. Then, too, Mary was in love with Dave Thompson, a neighbor young man and one of the most ardent patriots in that part of the country, and his influence had caused her to turn toward the Whig side of the question.

The British officer was the object of great interest and curiosity on the part of the four. He was wounded in such a peculiar manner that they wondered at it and were eager to hear how it had happened. The major satisfied their curiosity—that is to say, he told them a story that pleased him while they were looking after his wounds; he would not have told them that he had been overcome and mutilated thus by one "rebel" for the world. There was a pretty young lady present, and the officer wished to make as good an impression as possible, so he said that he had been set upon by four rebels and that they had made him a prisoner and had mutilated him while he was helpless; but that he had finally escaped. And he breathed out threats in such a fierce manner that his hearers shuddered and thought that it would go hard with the men who had treated the gallant major thus when once he succeeded in getting at them.

When asked if he thought the four who had attacked him were residents of that neighborhood, he replied that he did not think so; that they looked and acted as if strangers. "They were traveling southward," he said, "and I think they were rebel soldiers from the fort up at West Point."

The wounds were painful, but were not at all dangerous; the one in his arm, where Lucy Logan had shot him, was the most severe, but it was only a flesh wound so he was soon feeling fairly comfortable, and set about trying to charm Mary Clark. In this he was not very successful, and he fumed, inwardly, and cursed the "rebel" who had spoiled his good looks, and at the same time spoiled his

chances for making susceptible maidens fall in love with him at will.

Finding that he was not making progress he decided to go to bed, and he lay for hours, rolling and tumbling and anathematizing the youth who had marked him for life, and then escaped from his clutches afterward when he thought he had him at his mercy.

"But I'll get even with him!" groaned the major; "I'll kill him yet—but not until after I have cut off his ears, just to let him see how it feels!"

The officer got to sleep at last, but he did not look as if he had enjoyed a good night's rest when he came downstairs next morning. At the breakfast-table he was rendered ill at ease by the talk of Dan, who said that a Whig boy had passed that morning and had told him of an encounter that had taken place at the Logan home between a party of redcoats and a party of the Whig boys of the neighborhood. The major came near saying something that would have showed them that he had been a member of the party of British soldiers, on one or two occasions, and had only caught himself in time.

Indeed, the suspicions of Mrs. Clark and Mary were aroused by the major's manner, and they talked the matter over when they were at work, later, washing the dishes; and they decided that the officer had been a member of the band of redcoats that had been so soundly thrashed, but that for some reason he did not wish the fact known.

After breakfast the major made a lot of inquiries of Dan Clark and found out all he could regarding the youths who had banded themselves together under the name of "Home Guards." When he had secured all the information possible, he borrowed a horse of Mr. Clark, and bidding the different members of the family good-by, rode away in the direction of Stony Point.

"If I don't make things lively for those cursed youngsters who call themselves 'Home Guards,' then my name isn't Marcy!" he muttered as he rode along.

When he reached the fort on Stony Point, and his comrades got a look at his face, they did not know what to think. He told them the true story of how it had happened, as he knew it would do no good to lie about it, and many were the exclamations of amazement when it was learned that one young fellow had gotten the better of the major, who was considered the best swordsman of the regiment.

"I wonder who he could have been?" remarked one of the officers. "He is no common man you may depend on that."

"I should say that he isn't any common man!" replied

major. "He is a demon in a duel. I couldn't touch him."

"You don't have any suspicion regarding his identity?"

"None whatever. He was a young fellow, though, not over twenty at the most; of that I am certain."

"Well, well! I would not have believed it possible that a boy could master you with a sword."

"Neither would I have believed it, but the fact remains that he did it—and he has ruined my looks forever—fiends make him!"

"He has spoiled your appearance somewhat, major," was the reply. There was not much sympathy in the officer's tone, however. The truth was, that Major Marcy was not very well liked; he was overbearing and terribly conceited, and his brother officers were not heartbroken over the trouble which had come upon their comrade.

"Served him right!" one said to a chum, whom he knew could not repeat what was said. "I am glad he got trimmed up so nicely. He was so conceited and prided himself on his good looks to such an extent, and was so constantly trying to break the hearts of all the girls with whom he came in contact, that it gives me pleasure to gaze upon that shaven face and those stub ears of his. He won't be able to break so many hearts in the future."

The soldiers who had been at the Logan home the night before with the major and who had been put to flight by the band of youths, had hastened to Stony Point and reported that they had been attacked by a force of a couple hundred "rebel" soldiers; so, now, when the major reported that the supposed soldiers were only boys of the neighborhood, the redcoats who had fled before them felt quite cheap. They were eager to return and have it out with the youths, and a party was made up for the purpose and the major was given command, he begging the privilege.

"You see, I want to get a chance at the young scoundrel who disfigured me," he said; "he is probably in that neighborhood yet, and if I can get at him I will have revenge for what he has done to me."

The major's tone was vicious and it was plain that if he was to get the youth in his power it would go hard with him.

An hour later the party rode away, bound for the scene of their discomfiture of the previous evening.

CHAPTER VII.

GETTING READY FOR THE REDCOATS.

Dick did not think there was any danger that the redcoats would return that night, so had no hesitation in going

to bed and getting a good night's sleep; but next morning he told Mr. Logan's folks that he suspected that the British would be back some time during the day, eager for revenge for the treatment of the evening before.

"What had better be done?" asked Mr. Logan. "They will come right here, don't you think?"

"Yes—if they are permitted to do so."

Dick said this significantly and the three brightened up.

"How are they to be prevented?" asked Dick's host.

"I guess we shall have to call upon the 'Home Guard' to help us out again."

"That is a good idea!" agreed Mr. Logan.

"The very thing!" exclaimed Lucy.

"How many are there in the company, do you think?" asked Dick.

"About fifty, I have heard Joe say," replied Lucy.

"That will be enough men for the purpose, I think," said Dick, reflectively; "I don't think the British will bring more than one hundred and we will be able to more than hold our own against that number."

"What!—fifty boys against one hundred trained soldiers?" exclaimed Mrs. Logan. "Surely you will all be killed!"

Dick smiled. "I don't think there is any danger of that," he said; "I don't mean that the boys shall stand up in front of the redcoats and exchange shot for shot and volley for volley. I know a trick worth a dozen of that."

"You are thinking of ambushing them!" exclaimed Mr. Logan.

"That is it, exactly; we will lay in wait for them and will take them by surprise when they come along and will be able, I am confident, to discourage them sufficiently so that they will take the back track in a hurry."

"Oh, I hope you will succeed!" exclaimed Lucy.

"I don't have any doubts regarding the matter; and now just direct me so that I will be able to find the way to the home of the nearest 'Home Guards' boy. It is time I was off, if I am to make a success of this."

"Mr. Farrell's is the closest place," said Lucy; "and Joe is the commander of the 'Home Guards.' I will go with you, Mr. Slater, and show you the way to his home."

"Thank you, Miss Lucy; you are very kind," said Dick.

"Oh, she'll be glad to go, Mr. Slater; Joe is a handsome young fellow, you know, and——"

"Mother!" cried Lucy, shaking her finger and blushing like a peony.

Dick laughed. "So sits the wind in that quarter, eh?"

he remarked. "Well, judging from what I saw of him last night, Joe Farrell is a fine young fellow."

"Indeed he is!" from Mr. Logan.

"Of course he is!" coincided Lucy; "but," with a side-wise glance at Dick, "that is no sign that he is—that he——" She broke off suddenly, and, still blushing, turned to Dick and said: "Are you ready to go?"

"Yes, Miss Lucy; lead the way."

They left the house and made their way across a field and through a strip of timber, and on coming out on the other side, found themselves at the home of the Farrells.

Joe saw them coming, and that he was glad to see Lucy was evident, but it was doubtful if he was pleased by seeing her in company with the young stranger.

He greeted Dick pleasantly, however, after giving Lucy a bright smile and a cheery "Good morning."

"I will go on in and see Mamie," said Lucy; "you two boys have business together which does not require the presence of any one else."

Then she hastened on into the house and was greeted joyously by a girl of about her own age—Mamie Farrell, Joe's sister.

"Who is that handsome young fellow you came with, Lucy?" asked Mamie.

"He is a stranger who stayed all night at our house; his name is Tom Lacy—but didn't Joe tell you about seeing him at our house last night when the boys had the encounter with the redcoats?"

"Oh, yes; so he did. And this is the young man, then?" "Yes."

"He's about the most handsome fellow I ever saw, Lucy."

"He is good looking, Mamie." The latter was eyeing her visitor closely, and in spite of herself Lucy could not help blushing.

"Be careful, Lucy Logan," warned Mamie; "don't you go to throwing Joe over for this stranger! If you do, I shall hate you!"

"I don't know that it is any of your affairs, Mamie Farrell!" retorted Lucy, with a toss of her head. "Nor is it any of Joe's."

The two almost glared at each other for a few moments and then Lucy suddenly relented. She stepped forward and passed her arm around Mamie's neck. "We mustn't quarrel, Mamie," she said, "for there is going to be a battle to-day between the redcoats and our boys of the 'Home Guards,' and it would be bad if we were to fall out and then some of the boys should be killed. We may have trouble enough without making more for ourselves."

"Are you sure you haven't fallen in love with the handsome young stranger, Lucy?" with a searching look.

"Of course I haven't, you silly! I like him, that is all, as there is reason I should," and she went on and told how Dick had kept her from being insulted by the major, and all the story.

"Goodness! how romantic!" exclaimed Mamie. "I don't know but I should be tempted to forgive you if you had fallen in love with him, for I fear I should have done so had I been in your place. And they are going to fight the redcoats to-day, you say?"

"Yes; that is the reason Dick—I mean Mr. Lacy came over to see Joe. He is going to take the 'Home Guards' boys and ambush the redcoats and give them a lesson they won't forget in a hurry."

Dick lost no time in explaining his business to Joe, and the youth was right in for doing what Dick wished. "I can get fifty of the boys together in two hours, easily," he said, and was urged to do so.

"It is important that a strong blow be struck the British when they come," Dick told him; "for if they are allowed to do as they wish, they will do a lot of damage. They know that the majority of the people of this neighborhood are patriots, and they will plunder and burn with a free hand."

"I understand," said Joe; "I will guarantee to have fifty of the boys here within two hours."

"All right; get them here, Joe." In order to make him the more willing to do as he was told, Dick, under a bond of secrecy, told him who he was and Joe was the most astonished fellow in the world when told that his companion was Dick Slater, the famous scout and spy, and the captain of "The Liberty Boys of '76."

"I'll get the boys here and then you take command," he said; "with you to tell us what to do we shall be able to make the British wish they had remained at Stony Point!"

"All right, Joe; but don't tell any of the boys who I am, as I don't wish it known to the British that I am in the vicinity as that would make them very watchful, and I should be unable to do much in the way of spying."

"I'll not tell a single one of them who you are, Dick," was the assurance.

Just then another youth of about Joe's age put in an appearance and was greeted joyously by the latter. The newcomer was one of the members of the "Home Guards," and his name was Sam Winthrop. He had been with the party the evening before and had seen Dick, and when Joe told him what was in the wind he was delighted.

"I'll help you get the boys together, Joe," he offered; two of us can do it quicker than one."

"So they can, Sam, and I shall be glad of your help. You can take the boys on the west side of the road and I'll take the ones on the east side."

"All right; but say, I have some news that may be of interest."

"What is it, Sam?" asked Joe.

"It is this: You know that fellow that Mr. Lacy here had the fight with and who was the leader of the band of redcoats that came to Mr. Logan's last night?"

"Yes, yes; what of him?" asked Joe, eagerly, while Dick looked interested.

"Why, he stayed all night at Mr. Clark's."

"He did?" cried Joe.

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"Why, I just came from there. I stopped and was telling Dan about the fight with the redcoats down at Mr. Logan's, and was rubbing it into him a bit—for his folks are rank Tories, you know, Joe—and when I started away I stopped in the edge of the timber and looked back, and I saw that fellow come out in the yard."

"You did?"

"Yes; and then I waited and watched, and fifteen minutes later he mounted one of Mr. Clark's horses and rode away in the direction of Stony Point."

Joe looked at Dick, who nodded his head and said: "Just as soon as he reaches Stony Point he will get up his party and come back. He will want revenge on you boys, and has hopes of finding and revenging himself on me, too."

"I have no doubt you are right," agreed Joe; "well, Sam and I will start out at once and we will have the boys here in an hour and a half at the outside."

"Shall I remain here or at Mr. Logan's?" asked Dick.

"Just as you please," was Joe's reply; then he added: "Perhaps it would be as well to stay here. We will be just that much nearer the point from which the enemy will come."

"Very well; I will stay here."

Joe and Sam hastened away and Dick walked to the house and knocked on the door. He was admitted by Lucy, who had seen him coming, and she introduced him to Mamie, and then to Mr. and Mrs. Farrell.

"Where have Joe and Sam gone?" asked Lucy.

Dick told her, and when Mr. and Mrs. Farrell heard what was on the tapis they looked alarmed. "Goodness!"

gasped Mrs. Farrell, "I am afraid we shall have serious trouble!"

"The redcoats will have serious trouble," smiled Dick. "We will make it so warm for them that they will wish they had remained at Stony Point."

"But you boys won't be able to cope with a hundred redcoats, will you?" asked Mr. Farrell, dubiously.

"The way we figure on doing, we shall," was the reply; "we are going to lie in wait for them and take them by surprise."

"Oh, that is it?"

"Yes."

"Well, I hope you will succeed in putting them to flight right at the first, so that there will be no real engagement, and then perhaps the lives of our boys may be spared."

"We will attend to the redcoats in splendid style, you may be sure," said Dick, confidently.

Half an hour later the boys began coming in; those who lived not far distant having gotten ready and come on to the meeting place at once. Within the hour and a half, as Joe had promised, the company of "Home Guards" was at Mr. Farrell's. The boys were armed and eager for the fray. The encounter with the redcoats the evening before had just whetted their appetites, so to speak.

Dick began giving instructions at once and it did not take long. All soon understood what would be required of them, and promised to obey orders implicitly—Joe having told them that they were to look to Mr. "Lacy" for the orders.

As soon as this bit of necessary work had been done Dick ordered the youths to march, and the party set out, followed by the cheery words of encouragement from the Farrells and from Lucy Logan.

The party marched up the road a distance of a mile and then took up its position beside the road and just within the edge of the timber, where there was a lot of thick bushes and underbrush.

"This is an ideal place for an ambuscade," said Dick; "we should be able to put the redcoats to flight without losing a man of our own."

"I should think so," agreed Joe.

"I have divided you into two parties," went on Dick; "and now I wish to explain what I am going to do: When the redcoats appear we will let about half their number get past us and then I will give the order to fire. Your party, Joe, will discharge a volley which will throw the redcoats into disorder, and then I will give another order to fire and my party will discharge a volley. Then we will draw our pistols and fire several volleys—and by that time

the redcoats will be getting away about as fast as they know how, or I miss my guess."

The boys listened carefully, and promised to remember and do just as their commander wished them to do.

They waited and watched eagerly and hoped to see the enemy coming, but they were forced to possess their souls in patience, for it was more than two hours before the redcoats put in an appearance. They were nearly a mile away, but were plain to be seen, as the road was straight at this point.

"Now, get ready, boys, and keep perfectly cool," cautioned Dick; "remember to take careful aim before you fire. That is the main point. If you fire at random you will do but little damage and we might easily get the tables turned on us; but if you take careful aim, just the same as though you were out hunting and aiming at a squirrel, then, when you fire, you will do good execution and the enemy will be given such a severe blow that it will not be in any condition or mood for trying to strike us in return. I will tell you when to take aim and when to fire, and don't forget what I have said."

The boys promised, and awaited the coming of the redcoats with an eagerness that was shown on their faces. There was grim determination shown there also and Dick was not afraid but that they would do their part when the time came.

Closer and closer came the redcoats. They were riding along in twos, talking and laughing, and suspecting nothing. They were nearly two miles from the home of the Logans—for which point they were headed—and had no thought that they might be met by an enemy before reaching their destination.

They were soon to be awakened, however. On they came, and were soon almost opposite the point where the youths were concealed. Dick waited till about one-third of the force had passed and then gave the signal to take aim. He saw the boys obey, and waiting till he was sure they had secured aim he called out:

"Fire! Give it to the scoundrels!"

Crash—roar!

Twenty-five rifles and muskets belched forth their hail of death and destruction, and a dozen saddles were emptied, while the British force was thrown into terrible disorder. They had not been expecting anything of this kind and did not know what to think or do. Before they could make up their minds what had struck them, there came the command, "Fire!" and a second volley rang out.

This was almost as destructive as the first and the redcoats were badly demoralized. Major Marcy tried to get

his men straightened out, however, for he had a suspicion that he knew who the attacking party was. He had drawn his sword and was shouting orders at the top of his voice.

"Charge them, men!" he roared. "Charge the scoundrels! They are only boys and will run the instant we start toward them. At them, I say!"

It was noticeable, however, that he did not make any advance himself. Evidently he was not so certain that the boys would run as he let on to be. A number of the redcoats drew pistols and fired into the bushes, but this was quickly stopped, for the boys began firing pistol volleys in rapid succession, and this completed the demoralization of the redcoats. They turned their horses' heads in the opposite direction and dashed away up the road at the best speed of which the animals were capable; Major Marcy wasn't the last one to get away, either. Indeed, he was among the first.

A wild, triumphant cheer went up from the boys of the "Home Guards." They had whipped the British—at any rate they had put the redcoats to flight and had killed and wounded more than a score.

The boys would have rushed out into the road and waved their hats and given three cheers, but Dick stopped them. "The first thing to do is to reload all our weapons," he said; "we have emptied them and if the redcoats were to turn and come back we would be forced to flee. Load the rifles and muskets, first, and then the pistols."

The boys recognized the wisdom of this course, and went to work at once. It was well that they did so, for they had just finished when they saw the redcoats come to a stop. They were half a mile away, but they turned their horses' heads and came galloping back, evidently bent on revenging themselves on the boys who had taken them by surprise and created such havoc in their ranks.

Dick told the boys to get ready and give the enemy a volley as it came up, and this they did. The one was enough; the redcoats had figured on catching the youths with empty weapons, doubtless, but they had failed, and lost no time in getting back out of range.

The boys reloaded their rifles and muskets and watched the redcoats, eager to see what they would do now. They talked for quite a while, and then one of their number rode forward, waving a white handkerchief.

"Ha! a flag of truce!" exclaimed Joe Farrell.

"Yes," said Dick; "he wants to talk with us. I'll just see what he has to say."

Dick stepped out into the road as the man rode up, and confronted him. "Well, what do you want?" he asked.

"Are you the man in command?" was the counter question.

"I am."

"All right; I wished to ask if you would permit us to come and take care of our wounded and bury the dead?"

"Certainly we will permit you to do that. It will save us the trouble, you see. We have no place or desire to keep your wounded comrades, and you will be doing us a big favor by taking them away."

"All right; I'll return and report. And you—you will withdraw and won't fire on us while we are at work?"

The redcoat was evidently somewhat suspicious.

"Judging us by yourselves?" asked Dick, with sarcasm.

"N-no, but—I thought—thought that—that——"

"That—what?"

"That as you were boys and not real soldiers you might not be willing to observe the rules of war and might get us into the trap and spring it on us."

"Oh, you need have no fears," replied Dick; "we will observe the rules of war in every respect; so return to your commander and tell him that he is at liberty to come and look after his dead and wounded, but that if he knows when he is well off he will leave this part of the country and go back to Stony Point and stay there."

"I'll tell him."

"Do so; if he remains in this neighborhood with his force he must take the consequence—which will be severe, I assure you, as we do not intend that you shall do any damage to the patriot families of this vicinity if we can help it."

"I don't think he will want to stay."

The man turned and rode back to where the redcoats were waiting, and Dick re-entered the timber and told the boys to move down the road a hundred yards or so, which they did. Then they watched the enemy and saw them approaching the spot where the dead and wounded soldiers lay.

Major Marcy and a number of the redcoats dismounted and made a survey of the field. Those of the redcoats who were wounded were carried to the home of Mr. Clark, the Tory, who lived only about a quarter of a mile away, and then a long trench was dug and the dead soldiers were buried. Then the redcoats, with an angry look along the edge of the timber, made their way slowly up the road to the Clark house, where they stopped.

"Those fellows looked as if they would have liked to get a chance at us, didn't they?" said Joe, as the redcoats were riding away.

"So they did," replied Dick. "Well, unless they re-

turn to Stony Point and let this end the matter they will get a chance at us—or, rather, we will get another chance at them."

The boys remained where they were until they saw the party of redcoats take its departure, and then Dick stationed scouts to keep a lookout for the enemy in case it should return, and, with the main force, went back to the home of the Farrells.

Mr. and Mrs. Farrell and Mamie, and Lucy Logan were awaiting their coming with considerable anxiety, for they had heard the sound of the firing, and did not know but that some of the boys might have been killed. When told that such was not the case, they were delighted and their faces took on a happy look.

"Do you think the redcoats will give up their idea of doing damage to the homes of the patriot families of the neighborhood, Mr. Lacy?" asked Mr. Farrell, somewhat anxiously.

"I rather think they will—at least for the present, Mr. Farrell. You see it is something of a side issue, and the commander at Stony Point will not be in for letting the men come back here again when he learns that it is dangerous to do so. He has not any too many men in the garrison at the Point, anyway, and will be averse to losing any more."

"I hope and pray that you are right."

"I am sure that it will turn out that way, sir; I have left scouts out, however, to keep watch and should the redcoats come back we shall know of their coming in time to get ready to repulse them."

One of the scouts followed the party of British troopers a couple of miles, and then, being sure that they were surely going back to Stony Point and were not simply acting as they had for a ruse, he returned and reported to Dick.

The latter had no doubt that the redcoats had all they wanted, but to make sure that the people of the settlement should be protected from a surprise, he arranged with the youths for them to gather at the Farrel home immediately on hearing a series of signals, which would be made by firing a rifle a certain number of times.

This having been arranged, the youths dispersed and went to their homes, well pleased with the morning's work. As Joe said: "The redcoats won't be apt to bother us soon again; we gave them too severe a lesson, this time."

Dick returned to the Logan home with Lucy, and was greeted with delight by Mr. and Mrs. Logan. They realized that the youth had doubtless saved the homes of the patriot settlers of the neighborhood from being burned to the ground.

"You knew just what to do, Mr. Slater," said Mr. Logan; "and as a result you were enabled to whip the redcoats. Otherwise our boys might have made the attempt, and, not understanding how to do such things, many of them would no doubt have been killed."

"Yes, indeed!" coincided Mrs. Logan; "we certainly owe you hearty thanks, Mr. Slater."

"Not at all," dissented Dick; "I am glad to have been able to do a little something, and I consider that it was my duty to do it."

The rest of that day passed quietly, and as soon as it was dark Dick set out on a spying expedition. He was headed for Stony Point, and he wished to learn something regarding the approaches where the sentinels were stationed, and everything like that. It would be dangerous work, but he had done such work before and did not hesitate.

CHAPTER VIII.

DICK'S DARING SPY WORK.

He went on horseback, as it was about three miles to Stony Point, and when he was within a third of a mile of his destination he dismounted, and leading the horse into the timber, tied him to a tree.

"There; you will be safe there till I return, old fellow," he murmured, and then making his way back to the road Dick walked onward in the direction of the Point.

As he drew near his destination he slackened his speed and advanced very slowly, keeping a sharp lookout, for he knew that he might run onto a sentinel at any moment.

He reached the causeway which crossed the deep morass separating the Point from the mainland, without having encountered a sentinel, however, and made his way slowly and cautiously across the causeway. He was sure he would find a sentinel on guard at the farther end of the bridge, and in this he was right. It was quite dark, the night being cloudy, but just before he reached the end of the causeway he caught sight of a glow which was caused by burning tobacco in a pipe which was undoubtedly held in the mouth of a British soldier.

Dick paused and stood perfectly still for a few moments. How was he to get past the sentinel? This was a hard question to answer, but the young man was equal to it. Stooping, he reached under the end of the boards, which, placed side by side, formed the causeway, and drew forth a good sized stone—the boards being placed on a sort of

rude, stone foundation, or two of them, rather, there being one at either end of the boards.

Straightening up, Dick threw the stone and it struck the ground some distance behind the sentinel, who gave utterance to an exclamation and whirled around; at the same moment the youth stole forward on tiptoe and succeeded in getting off the bridge and away without being heard by the sentinel, whose attention was attracted in the other direction.

"So far, so good," thought Dick; "now I think I shall be able to nose around and see how the fortifications are arranged and laid out, and the information will be of great value to the commander-in-chief when he gets ready to try to capture the Point."

He made his way carefully up the rocky hill. He was very careful where he set his feet, for he knew that he was liable to dislodge a stone which would go rolling down the slope and arouse the suspicions of the sentinel.

Up, up Dick toiled. "Jove! this wouldn't be the most pleasant place to storm that there is in the world!" he thought; "it would be no fun to charge up this hill in the face of a storm of bullets. Phew! just think of it!"

Onward and upward he toiled and at last came to the first line of fortifications. He knew that there would be sentinels posted along this line and was forced to be very careful. He lay against the rough, stone wall and listened. He could hear the measured tramp of the sentinel, and by listening intently and keeping as close an account of the time as was possible, managed to estimate the length of the sentinel's beat. He discovered, to his satisfaction, that he was near one end of the beat, the other end being more than a hundred yards away, he judged, as he could barely hear the man's footsteps when he was farthest away.

This knowledge acquired, Dick waited till the sentinel was at the farther end of his beat and then climbed cautiously but as quickly as possible over the fortification and made his way onward up the hill.

He climbed carefully, and presently reached the second line of fortifications. This one he learned was right at the brow of the hill and beyond it was the garrison. There were sentinels here also but Dick was enabled to avoid them, as he could hear their footsteps on the rocks, and, seizing upon the moment when the nearest sentinel was at the farther end of his beat, the youth leaped over the stone wall and was in the enemy's camp.

Dick knew he was taking big risks, but he wished to learn, if possible, approximately at least, the number of men in the garrison.

This was not such a difficult matter as might be supposed.

Dick knew how many men usually occupied a tent, and in order to get at the number of men it was only necessary to count the tents.

Of course, Dick had to be very careful, for should his presence be discovered he would most certainly be captured; and if captured he would surely be put to death, as Major Marcy was there and would recognize him and would hear to nothing else. The fact of his being caught within the encampment would be sufficient to stamp him as a spy, however, and this would insure his death.

But Dick did not intend to be discovered and captured. He succeeded in counting the tents and figured that there were about six hundred men in the garrison. There was a camp-fire burning and a number of officers and soldiers were seated at a little distance engaged in conversation, but Dick did not dare venture close enough to hear what they were saying.

"I guess I had better let well enough alone and not take any more chances," said Dick to himself; "I have secured considerable valuable information, and now the thing for me to do is to get away from here."

He moved cautiously back toward the stone wall, and reaching it, climbed over. Then he heard the sentinel, who was some distance away, give utterance to the challenge: "Halt! Who comes there?"

Dick was startled for an instant, but only for an instant.

"He is not challenging me," the youth said to himself; "I can't see him and I'm confident he could not see me. He is challenging some one else."

This was soon proven to be the case, for the faint murmur of a voice in reply to the sentinel's challenge came to Dick's ears, but he could not make out what was said. He was curious to know who the newcomer was, so decided to wait and see.

He waited a few minutes and had the satisfaction of seeing the newcomer approach the camp-fire. Dick saw that the newcomer was an old negro who carried a large basket on his arm. The officers and men immediately crowded around the negro, and there was considerable talking and laughing for a few minutes. Dick understood the meaning of the scene, perfectly.

"The old negro has brought them some berries or fruit of some kind," he said to himself, and then a thought struck him: Would not the old negro be possessed of the countersign? Dick thought so, and he made up his mind that he would find out where the old negro lived. "Then if General Washington decides to make an attack on Stony Point I will go to the old negro and either bribe or force him to give me the countersign!" the youth said to him-

self. "That would be a wonderful help and would enable us to surprise the garrison."

Dick watched the scene eagerly for a few minutes longer, and then wishing to be where he could follow the old negro when he left the Point, the youth decided to get away ahead of him.

Dick made his way down the slope, and, watching his chance, got over the fortification without being seen by the sentinel. The worst of it remained, however, and that was to get across the causeway without the sentinel at that point seeing him. He decided that as the stone-throwing business had worked so well before, it might work again. There was nothing else that promised better, at any rate, and picking up a stone, the size of his fist, he made his way slowly and carefully down until within ten yards of the end of the bridge.

He located the sentinel by the sound of his footsteps, and then threw the stone in such a manner that it would strike the ground at a point fifteen or twenty yards behind the soldier.

Chug! rattle! went the stone on the gravel, and Dick, taking it for granted that the sentinel's attention was attracted to the point where the stone had struck, slipped onto the bridge and hastened across it. Being careful to walk on his tiptoes he made scarcely any noise at all and the sentinel never for a moment suspected that he had been the victim of a trick played by the most famous patriot spy in America.

Dick took up his position behind a tree near the farther end of the causeway and waited patiently for the appearance of the negro.

Perhaps half an hour passed and then the youth heard footsteps on the bridge. Nearer and nearer they came and presently a dark form passed within arm's length of the youth and passed on up the road.

Dick followed at a safe distance and presently the negro turned aside and entered a path which led into the woods. The youth was determined to find out where the colored man lived, so he kept after him. A quarter of a mile farther on they came to a clearing consisting of four or five acres of ground. Near the centre of the clearing was a log cabin, and feeling sure now that he would know where to put his hand on the colored man when he wished to do so, Dick turned about and hastened back to the road.

Marking the spot so that he would be able to find the path again, Dick hastened to where he had left his horse, and, mounting, rode away toward the north.

"The commander-in-chief must be placed in possession of the information which I have gained, at the earliest pos-

sible moment," thought Dick; "I know that he is eager to capture Stony Point, and I don't see why, after I have told him what I know, he should not be able to do it."

Dick was riding along, thinking of how fortunate he had been in being enabled to make his way up into the British camp at Stony Point, when suddenly he was startled by a sharp voice calling out:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"A friend," replied Dick.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

"I am a civilian; I don't know any countersign."

"Oh, you're not a soldier, then?"

"No."

"Humph! What are you, Whig or Tory?"

Dick was pretty sure that the sentinel was a redcoat; he did not think it possible that General Washington had sent any of his men down so far, and so he spoke up, boldly, and said:

"I am a Tory."

"Oh, you are?"

"Yes."

"You are a loyal king's man, are you?"

"I am."

There was a few moments' silence and then Dick heard the click of a musket lock followed by the words:

"You may be a loyal man, but I doubt it; I guess I'll have to stop you, stranger, and send you to the commander over at the Point. Come on up here and dismount—and don't try any tricks, for if you do it won't be good for you. There are four of us here and it would be suicidal for you to resist."

Now Dick had no desire to be taken over to the Point; indeed he was in no mood to permit himself to be detained at all, and he decided that he would not be detained. He would make a sudden dash and try to get past the redcoats. They would fire at him, of course, but he figured that it would only be an accident if they should hit him. He was willing to risk it, anyway, and leaning forward he slapped his horse on the neck and called out to him to go.

The intelligent animal leaped forward into a run, and then crack, crack, crack, crack! went four muskets.

CHAPTER IX.

A DOG-KILLING EXPEDITION.

One of the bullets knocked Dick's hat off and another whistled past within an inch of his nose, but he was not injured and rode onward up the road in triumph.

"Jove!" that was a close shave," he said to himself; "two of those bullets came closer than I like to have them come. I'm out a good hat, too; but it is better to lose my hat than my head. I guess that on the whole I have nothing to complain of; it's a nice, warm night and there is no danger of my catching cold as a result of not having any headgear."

Dick rode steadily onward. The way became more and more rough and uneven, and the youth was forced to let his horse go at a moderate pace. As it was only a matter of about fifteen miles to West Point, he could easily reach there before daylight, anyway.

And he did. He arrived at West Point about an hour before sunrise, and lay down for a short rest. Two hours later he was up and seated at the breakfast-table with his comrades, the brave, jolly set of youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76." They were eager to know what Dick had been doing, and he told them the story as they ate. When he had finished his breakfast he made his way to headquarters, and was ushered into the presence of the commander-in-chief of the Continental army.

General Washington had just finished his breakfast and he greeted Dick pleasantly.

"Back again, Dick?" he cried. "How are you?" giving the youth his hand. "What success did you have?" he added, eagerly.

"Very good success, your excellency," replied Dick; "I visited Stony Point last night and took a look at the fortifications."

"You did?" There was surprise in the tone. "How did you manage it? I supposed that it would be impossible for any one to get up to the encampment on the Point itself. My understanding was that there was but one way of reaching there—by going across a narrow causeway from the mainland to the Point, and I supposed this would be guarded so closely that even so successful and skillful a spy as yourself would be unable to get across, Dick."

"It was rather difficult, your excellency; but I managed it and was within the British camp up on the top of the Point and succeeded in getting a good look at everything. I can make a drawing showing the fortifications, and can tell you approximately how many men the British have."

"Good! And how many men have they?"

"About six hundred."

"Ah! Well, that is about the number I supposed was there. And now, Dick, here is pen and paper; draw the Point and the fortifications as well as you can and I will be able to make arrangements for storming the British position."

Dick took a seat at a table and quickly made a drawing of the fortifications at Stony Point. Then General Washington began asking him questions, all of which the youth answered to the satisfaction of the great man. He also told the commander-in-chief about the old colored man who visited the British encampment to sell berries, and gave it as his belief that the countersign could be gotten out of him either by bribery or threats. General Washington was delighted.

"The very thing!" he declared. "Armed with the countersign we will be able to slip right up almost to the top of the hill—to the first line of fortifications, at any rate—and will be likely to take them by surprise, which will make the attack almost sure to succeed. You have done splendidly, Dick, and if we do succeed in capturing Stony Point a large share of the glory of the affair will be credited to your account."

"I do not care for that, your excellency," replied the youth, blushing with pleasure; "the knowledge that I have done my duty and that in doing it I have aided in striking a blow at the enemy and have benefited our country, is sufficient payment for me."

"Well said, my boy! Well, one thing is certain: Never in the three years I have known you have you failed of doing your full duty, and many, many times you have done a great deal more than your duty. I wish I had ten thousand such men as are the 'Liberty Boys'; I would speedily drive the redcoats out of the country!"

Then the commander-in-chief sent for General Wayne—"Mad Anthony" he was called, on account of his desperate and headlong valor on the battlefield—and he was told what Dick had learned, and was asked if he thought he could successfully storm the British position on Stony Point.

"I'd storm the regions of his satanic majesty if you were to say the word, your excellency!" was "Mad Anthony's" prompt and characteristic reply. "Just tell me how you wish it done and when."

General Washington had great faith in the ability of General Wayne, and he talked the matter over with him for a couple of hours, Dick remaining and being questioned from time to time by both the officers. General Wayne entered into the affair with zest, and it was plain to be seen that he was eager to make the attempt to storm the strong British post on Stony Point.

After a long discussion, in which several other officers took part, they having been called in, it was decided that the attempt was practicable, and finally it was decided to storm Stony Point at the earliest possible moment.

"Very well; it is settled, then," said the commander-in-

chief, finally. "The attempt will be made and you shall command the force, General Wayne. You shall have twelve hundred men—just twice the number of the enemy—and by securing the countersign and thus being enabled to get across the causeway, you will be successful, no doubt, in giving the British a surprise."

"I think so," agreed "Mad Anthony," his eyes glowing in anticipation of the exciting work to come.

"Another thing," went on General Washington, calmly and deliberately, "your men must march to the attack with empty muskets, for if they were loaded, one of the weapons might be accidentally discharged at just the wrong moment and alarm the enemy."

"A splendid idea!" agreed General Wayne. "We won't need loaded muskets, anyway, for we shall capture the fort at the point of the bayonet. There will be no time or opportunity for firing."

"You are right," coincided the commander-in-chief; "and another thing: There are too many dogs in the vicinity of Stony Point; their barking, as you march along, would arouse the suspicions of the British and you would be unable to surprise them. All the dogs within three miles of the Point must die. Dick, do you want the job of killing the brutes?"

"If you say so, your excellency, I will take my 'Liberty Boys' and go to work at once."

"Very well; do so."

Dick saluted and withdrew. "I have some work for you, boys," he said, smiling, as he reached the point where the youths had their quarters.

"What is the work, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook.

Dick told them, and a chorus of exclamations escaped them.

"Well, well!"

"What a job that is!"

"Wants us to kill all the dogs in the vicinity of Stony Point, eh?"

"That will give us good practice in shooting."

"Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow!" went one, in excellent imitation of the barking of a dog.

They were a lively and jolly lot of youths. They were veterans, too, having been engaged in the majority of the most important battles that had been fought during the three years just past; and many them carried bullets and scars to show that they had seen severe service. But this had put no damper on their spirits; they were as jolly and lively as ever and were ready to fight at the drop of a hat.

Dick told the youths to get ready for the work, and they hastened to obey orders. It did not take long, and half

an hour later they rode out of the fort and away toward the south. It was a three-hours' ride, and then having reached the place of their labors they went to work. They put in the rest of the day, and killed a score or more of curs. The owners of the dogs remonstrated, in some cases, but it did no good, and their dogs were shot. When the men asked why this was being done, the youths gave evasive answers, for Dick had been cautioned to under no circumstances tell a soul what was in the wind.

So the boys told whatever came into their mind; but the reason more often given was that they wished practice in firing at living targets and that dogs were the largest brutes whose martyrdom would not entail hardship on the owners, so dogs were chosen for targets. Some of the farmers looked as if they doubted this statement, but they could think of no other reason why the young fellows should be killing the dogs, so said but little.

The youths camped out that night and next day went ahead with the good work. The news had gone out among the farmers, however, that their dogs were in danger, and when the youths started out they were surprised by not seeing anything of a dog or dogs at the first three or four houses they came to. They stopped and held a council.

"The dogs averaged one and a half to each house, yesterday," said Dick; "so I think there is trickery somewhere. It is my opinion that the people are hiding their dogs from us."

"That's what I think!"

"And I!"

"And I!"

It was the general belief that this was the case, and so Dick said: "Such being the case we must search for dogs at every house we come to. Don't the rest of you think that the thing to do?"

"Yes, yes!" was the cry.

"It is the only thing to do," said Bob Estabrook; "the dogs must die, for there must be no barking on the night the attack on Stony Point is made."

The next house the youths came to was dogless—at least so far as outward appearances went, but when search was made in the stable, two dogs were found and the boys proceeded to drag the animals out. The farmer came running to where they were and protested against the shooting, but to no avail; he was forced to witness the untimely death of his two canines.

This was kept up all day long, and the list was increased quite a good deal before nightfall. When darkness approached Dick found that they were close to the home of the Logans, and he decided to camp near there as he knew

he would receive a warm welcome from all the members of the family.

They encamped just back of the house in the edge of the timber, and as soon as they had gotten things in shape Dick went to the house to have a few minutes' conversation with his friends before supper, which the boys were just getting ready to get. To say that Mr. and Mrs. Logan and Lucy were glad to see Dick is stating it very mildly; they were delighted.

"We were afraid we would not get to see you again," said Mr. Logan; "we know how it is with you soldier boys—you are here one day, there to-morrow and the next day somewhere else."

"We are indeed glad to see you!" coincided Mrs. Logan.

"Yes, yes; we should never forgive you if you were to leave this part of the country without saying good-by to us," said Lucy.

"Oh, I would never think of doing that," said Dick, with a smile.

He remained at the house talking to Mr. Logan and Lucy for nearly half an hour and then rose to go, saying: "I judge that the boys have supper ready by this time, so I will go. I will drop in after supper and will bring my friend, Bob Estabrook."

"You will not do anything of the kind—I mean go out and eat supper with your boys, as you call them," said Lucy; "you will eat supper with us. It is nearly ready, and mother told me to keep you even if we had to use force, so you might as well yield first as last."

"And go and bring your friend in," said Mr. Logan; "we shall be pleased to have him take supper with us."

"Very well; I will do so, and thank you very kindly," said Dick, who had not forgotten the splendid meals he had eaten when there before. "I will go out and bring Bob back with me."

He hastened out to where the boys were encamped, and when he told Bob that he was invited to take supper in the house with the Logans, that irrepressible youth gave utterance to a whoop that would have shamed the best efforts of a Commanche Indian.

"Hurrah for me!" he cried. "Jove! I don't know when I have had a good, old-fashioned meal. I shall enjoy it; but it is tough that the rest of the boys have to stay out here and eat army fare."

"That's all right," said Mark Morrison; "we know that all of us can't eat in the house, and because we can't is no reason why you fellows shouldn't. Go on and enjoy yourselves; we'll get along all right."

The others all said the same, and so the two hastened to

the house, where Bob was introduced to the three members of the Logan family, and he speedily made himself acquainted, for he was so full of life and jollity that it was an easy task for him to do this.

The supper was enjoyed by the two "Liberty Boys," and Bob, could talk of nothing else when he went back out to where the rest of the boys were. "I know it isn't fair to you fellows," he said, "but I really can't help it."

The Logans had insisted on Dick and Bob sleeping in the house, but it was such warm, pleasant weather that it was really more comfortable sleeping out of doors on a blanket, so Dick and Bob thanked their hosts and said they would get along all right out with their comrades.

Next morning, when they were ready to start, Dick told Mr. Logan what their business was in that part of the country, and the farmer told him to go ahead and shoot their one dog, a shepherd, and a great favorite of Lucy's. Dick knew this, and he said that he could not kill Lucy's pet, but for them to keep the dog tied up for a few days.

Lucy was delighted when she learned that "Rover" was to be spared, and thanked Dick earnestly. Bidding the Logans good-by, the "Liberty Boys" set out, and they put in nearly a full day at the same work that had engaged their attention the previous days. They finished that afternoon and set out for West Point, which place they reached in time for a late supper.

Dick went to headquarters and reported to the commander-in-chief and was complimented on his good work. "If we fail in our attempt at surprising the garrison at Stony Point it will not be on account of the enemy being apprised of the approach of our men by the barking of dogs," he said.

CHAPTER X.

DICK AND SAMBO.

The preparations for the attack on the British garrison at Stony Point went steadily onward, and the men who were to make up the force under "Mad Anthony" were selected. They were, in the main, light infantry, veterans all, and among them, at Dick's request, were "The Liberty Boys of '76." General Washington knew that in an affair of this kind, where all was to be won or lost by a desperate charge, there were none in the patriot ranks who would do more valuable service than would the "Liberty Boys." They had been tested in the fire often and had

never been found wanting. General Wayne, too, well knew the terrible abilities of the "Liberty Boys," and was glad to have them included. Indeed he had already decided that in the rush up the hill at Stony Point, Dick Slater and his brave boys should have a place in the front ranks.

It was decided, finally, that the night of July 15th should witness the attempt on Stony Point. General Washington sent for Dick about ten o'clock on the morning of that day and told him he had some special and important work for him to do. "I want you to start at once," he said; "you must go down to the vicinity of Stony Point and visit the cabin of the negro whom you told us was visiting the British post selling berries, and from him you must get, by one means or another, the countersign. Do you understand?"

"Yes, your excellency," replied Dick; "I will secure the countersign if it is possible to do so."

"That is the most important thing of all," the commander-in-chief went on; "without the countersign it will be impossible to surprise the British; with it, it will be possible to do so—and the success or failure to surprise them may mean the success or failure of the enterprise; so you can easily see the importance of securing the countersign."

"I do see and understand it, your excellency, and I will secure the countersign if it is possible to do so."

"Very well; now go and get ready at once and set out on your journey."

Dick saluted and took his departure. When he reached the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys" he told them that he was going on ahead to do some work for the commander-in-chief, and that he would join them when they reached the vicinity of Stony Point. Then he placed some cold bread and meat in his saddle-bags, mounted his horse and set out. He rode southward steadily till noon when he stopped and ate his dinner. After a rest of an hour he remounted and rode onward.

He reached a point a mile and a half from Stony Point about four o'clock in the afternoon, and tying his horse back from the road a ways, in the timber, he began scouting around to see if there were any British sentinels guarding the road. He was very careful and put in a couple of hours, at the end of which time he was enabled to say of a certainty that there were no sentinels out. This settled, he went back to where his horse was, ate a bit of lunch, and then, mounting, rode onward till he was at a point about a mile west of the Point. Here he dismounted and again tied his horse.

"Now to see if I can find the negro man at home," he

said; "I must get the countersign, if such a thing is possible."

He made his way along the road and did not have much difficulty in finding the path which led to the cabin in the clearing. Turning into it he made his way along, and after a walk of a few minutes reached the clearing. He paused and took a look at the cabin before stepping forth from the sheltering timber. He feared, for one thing, that the negro might see him and take alarm, so waited to see whether he was in sight; another thing he thought might be possible and that was that there might be some redcoats around.

A brief survey showed him that there were no British about, however; and as he saw nothing of the colored man, either, he decided to advance.

Stepping forth from among the trees, he walked briskly across the clearing and knocked on the door. There was no reply, and after knocking again without result Dick tried the door.

It opened to his touch, and the youth entered the cabin and looked around him. No one was there; the colored man was absent.

"He is over at the Point, now, I'll wager," thought Dick; "it is as well. I shall be here, ready to greet him when he comes."

Fearing that the darky might take the alarm and not come to the cabin if he should see the door standing open, Dick closed it. Then he sat down and fixed himself so as to take things easy until the owner of the cabin put in an appearance.

Half an hour elapsed and then Dick heard the sound of footsteps outside. It was now about seven o'clock, but at this time of the year—July—it was yet quite light. The footsteps came nearer and nearer, and then the door was pushed open and the colored man entered. It happened that he did not at first see that there was some one in the room, and he placed his empty basket on the floor and turned around facing Dick before seeing him.

"Laws a-massy! who am you?" he exclaimed, lifting his hands and staring at the youth in open-mouthed amazement.

"I'm a friend, Sambo," replied Dick, quietly.

The negro's eyes opened wider than before. "How did yo' know my name, boss?" he asked. "Aw nevah seed yo' afore as I knows on."

"No? I suppose not. But I've seen you before."

"Yo' hav'?"

"Yes."

"W'en did yo' see me, boss; an' whar, ef I may ax?"

"That is neither here nor there; I have seen you before, Sambo, and I have come to see you on business of importance."

Dick spoke almost sternly, and a frightened look appeared on the negro's face. "Yo' wants ter see me on business ob importance, boss?" he asked, in trembling tones.

"Yes."

"W-whut d'yo' wanter see me 'bout?"

"I wish to ask you a few questions, Sambo."

The man looked behind him as if contemplating a retreat, and leaving the stranger in possession, but Dick lifted his hand and said: "Just stay where you are, Sambo. As I said, I wish to ask you a few questions. First, are you a Tory?"

The man looked frightened, but said: "Yo' mean am I one ob dem fellers whut wants de king ter whip?"

"Yes, that is what I mean."

The negro looked at Dick, dubiously, for almost a minute, and then he asked: "W-w'ich side is yo' on, boss?"

Dick laughed. "No, you don't, Sambo!" he said. "You can't play that trick on me; it is too ancient. I have used it myself a few times. I asked you a question and I want a truthful answer."

The negro studied Dick's face closely. "Yo' wants a trooful ans'er, does yo'?" he repeated.

"Yes; so go ahead and see to it that you tell the truth, and nothing but the truth."

"Well, den, uf yo' wants de troof, Aw'll giv' et to yo': Aw'm not er Tory."

Dick eyed the negro searchingly. "You are not a Tory?" he queried.

"No, sah."

"What are you—a patriot?"

"Yes, sah; Aw's er patriot, sah, 'deed I is!"

"Then why are you making regular trips to the British, at Stony Point?" Dick's voice was stern and there was a threatening look in his eyes.

The negro was evidently frightened; his voice trembled as he said: "Aw'll tell yo' w'y, boss. Aw goes dar ter sell strawb'ries ter de sojers."

"To sell strawberries to the soldiers, eh?"

"Yes, sah. Dey hain't no harm in dat, is dere? Aw needs deir gol' an' I goes up dere an' sells de berries. Aw don' do nothin' erg'inst de peeple whut is fightin' fur deir injependence."

"You are sure you are telling the truth, Sambo?" Dick eyed him searchingly.

"Aw sw'ar Aw is tellin' de troof, boss."

"Will you prove it?"

"'Deed Aw will, boss, uf yo'll jes' tell me how."

There was no mistaking the negro's earnestness, and Dick was inclined to credit his statement that he was a patriot; he would make him prove it, however, and so he said: "Very well, I will tell you how you can prove that you are a patriot."

"How, boss?"

"By telling me the countersign of the British."

The negro's face brightened. "Yo' meen whut Aw has ter say w'en I goes up ter de sent'n'l, boss?" he asked.

"Yes; what is it you have to say to the sentinel?"

"Aw says ter de sent'n'l, 'De fort am our'n.' "

"You mean that you say, 'The fort is ours?'"

"Yes, dat's it, boss; dat's de way de sojer fellers says it, dough I kain't quite twist my tongue dat way."

"And you will swear that that is the countersign, will you?"

"Yes, boss, Aw sw'ar et."

"Very well; I am going to try that countersign after a while, Sambo, and if it works all right, you will be all right; but if it should fail to work, then I pity you, that's all!"

"Oh, it'll work all right, boss. Aw'll go wid ye an'll do de talkin' uf yo' wants me ter."

"All right, Sambo; that's a bargain, and if you do your part you shall be well rewarded."

"All right, boss; Aw'll do my part, all right."

At this instant the sound of footsteps was heard, and then into the room strode Major Marcy, leading Lucy Logan by the arm. The girl was bound and gagged so she could make no outcry, but as her eyes fell upon Dick a look of joy o'erspread her face.

CHAPTER XI.

DICK RESCUES LUCY.

The negro had quickly retreated to the farther side of the room, leaving Dick and the major to glare at each other like tigers about to leap upon and rend each other.

"Scoundrel!" suddenly cried Dick, whipping out a pistol and leveling it. "What are you doing here with this girl a prisoner in your hands?"

A hoarse growl of rage escaped the lips of the major, and he suddenly threw his arm around Lucy's waist and held the girl's form in front of him as a shield.

"Shoot, if you dare!" he cried. "Shoot, if you wish to kill the girl!"

"You coward!" cried Dick; "let go of that girl and face me like a man!"

"I do not feel called upon to do anything of the kind. You are a cursed rebel and are not entitled to any consideration. I am going to use any means at my command to encompass your death, and you can talk all you want to. It will do you no good. You are doomed!"

A scornful smile appeared on Dick's face. "So I am doomed, am I?" he remarked.

"Yes; I am going to kill you!"

"When?"

"Right away!"

"Right away?"

"Yes."

"How are you going to do it?"

"I am going to shoot you dead!"

"Oh, that's the way you are going to do it?"

"It is!"

"I thought you said the other day that pistols were vulgar and that swords were the weapons of gentlemen?"

"When they are dealing with gentlemen; in this case pistols are all right, and I am going to use one on you. See, now I have you at my mercy!" the major drew a pistol and leveled it at the youth.

Dick did not flinch, but eyed the major coolly.

"So you think you have me at your mercy, do you?" he remarked, quietly.

"I know it. You dare not fire at me for fear of hitting the girl; while I am free to put a bullet through you!"

Dick realized that he was at a big disadvantage, but no one would have known that he realized it by his looks. He was as cool as ice, and there was a calm, easy smile on his face. Indeed, he was so cool and apparently fearless that the major was uneasy, even though he seemed to have the advantage on his side. He wondered if it could be possible that the young man had a surprise in store for him? The redcoat was fearful that such might be the case.

Suddenly a thought struck Dick: "Sambo!" he called out, "go around behind the major and seize him!"

The negro made no move toward obeying, but the major feared he might and he turned his head to look in that direction.

"Don't you dare——" he started to say, when Dick leaped forward like a panther and knocked the pistol aside.

Crack! it was discharged, but the bullet struck in the

farther end of the building, and did not come within ten feet of the youth it was intended for.

A wild cry of terror escaped Sambo. "Fo' de Lawd! I guess I'se a dead nigger!" he cried, and he began feeling of himself to see if he had been struck. Finding no evidence of a wound he began to feel better and watched the struggle which was taking place between Dick and Major Marcy.

The instant he knocked the pistol aside and it was discharged, Dick followed up his advantage and seized the redcoat by the throat.

"Let go of the girl, you coward!" cried Dick; "let go of her or I will choke you till you are black in the face!"

The major promptly obeyed. The fact was, he realized that he would have a hard fight on his hands, anyway, and would need the assistance of both hands, so he released Lucy and grappled with his antagonist.

"Sambo, untie the girl's hands and remove the gag!" ordered Dick, and the negro hastened to obey. He cut the cord which bound Lucy's hands and removed the gag, and Lucy, after moistening her tongue and lips, cried out: "Shall we help you, Dick?"

The brave girl was ready to take a hand and do what she could, and Dick's heart swelled with pleasure and admiration for the maiden's bravery.

"It is not necessary, Miss Lucy," he replied; "I can manage him, all right. Just step to one side out of danger and I will quickly overcome him."

"Yes, you will!" sneered the major, who was putting up as stiff a fight as he was capable of doing. "I will show you, you cursed rebel! I will show the girl, too, that you are no match for a man like myself."

"Deeds, not words, major, are what count," remarked Dick, ironically. "Don't brag so much but go to work and do something."

A snarl of rage escaped the lips of the officer, and he redoubled his exertions. To tell the truth, he was no mean antagonist, but Dick was a wonderful athlete and stronger than the majority of men, and gradually overcame his opponent, throwing him, finally, and falling upon him with such force as to knock all the breath out of his body.

"Bring me the rope, Sambo," called out Dick, and the negro hastened to obey.

"Oh, I'm so glad you beat him!" cried Lucy. "If you han't been able to do so I would have helped you, Dick!" with an eloquent look. "See, I had this club and was going to give him a blow on the head that would have rendered him unconscious!"

"You are a brave girl, Lucy!" said Dick, admiration in his voice; "I thank you."

"Oh, it is I who must thank you, Dick! You have saved me from this wretch a second time."

"That is all right, Lucy; I am glad that I was on hand to do so, and I will say that if I am brought into contact with you another time, you scoundrel!" this to the major. "I will finish you for good and all! Do you hear?"

Evidently the major did hear, for he glared up into Dick's eyes with deadly hatred, but he did not say a word. Doubtless he feared to say what he wished to say.

Sambo brought the rope and assisted Dick to tie the major's hands together behind his back and then he was allowed to sit up.

"Well, what do you think about it now?" asked Dick, with an ironical smile. "Do you think you will ever wish to enter into the kidnapping business again?"

"There is just one thing that I shall turn my attention to when I am again a free man," said the major, viciously, "and that is to the work of getting revenge on you!"

"Poor business," said Dick, with a shake of the head.

"I will kill you as sure as my name is Marcy!"

"It isn't good to make positive statements, major. I fear you will be unable to make your words good."

"You will see!"

"Well, in that case, then, perhaps I had better have it out with you here and now. I think I shall free your hands, major, and meet you, sword to sword, once more and settle the matter for good and all."

But the redcoat shook his head. "I shall not meet you," he said, sullenly; "you are a cursed rebel, while I am a——"

"Cowardly cur!" interpolated Dick.

"That is exactly what he is!" added Lucy, and the major's face was a picture of rage and chagrin as he glared first at the girl and then at Dick.

"That is all right; say what you like," growled the major. "I shall not meet you in a duel again, but I shall make it my business to hunt you down and kill you like you were a dog!"

"And I give you fair warning, you redcoated scoundrel, that I shall not spare your life next time, but shall kill you with as little compunction as though you were a snake!" said Dick, almost fiercely. "I shall not fool with you any longer."

The major turned pale. He was, in truth, afraid of the brave young "Liberty Boy," and he realized that if he attempted to kill Dick at some future time he would be taking his life in his hands unless, indeed, he could catch

youth at such a disadvantage that he could not defend himself.

Dick now turned to Lucy. "How came he to capture?" he asked.

"I was on my way home from Mamie Farrell's," replied the girl, "and he leaped out from behind a tree and seized me. Of course he was stronger than I and soon overpowered and bound and gagged me. I gave utterance to several screams for help, but I suppose no one heard me for no one came to my assistance. Then he took me to where his hide-out was and brought me here."

"Well, as it has turned out, I am glad he did bring you here, Lucy."

"So am I, Dick."

The major listened to this and grated his teeth. He was angry and disgusted. "What luck I have had, lately!" he muttered to himself. "That girl has been bad medicine—as bad as the beastly Indians of this country would say—to me."

Dick and Lucy now left the cabin, the youth telling Sambo to keep an eye on the prisoner. "If he tries to escape, throw him down and sit on him," said Dick.

The two were no sooner out of the cabin when the major turned to the negro: "Free my hands, Sambo!" He spoke in a tone of command, but the negro shook his head.

"I kain't do it, boss," he replied.

"You must do it. My comrades will kill you if they learn that you refused to help one of their comrades."

Again the negro shook his head. "I kain't do it, boss." The major changed his tactics. "If you will free my hands I will give you five pounds in gold, Sambo!" he said, in impressive tones.

But it made no impression on the colored man. He would not listen to the tempter. "Yo' kin keep yo' money, boss," he said, calmly, "I doan' wan' it."

No amount of persuasion could have any effect on the negro, and the officer presently gave up the attempt and passed into sullen silence.

As soon as they were out of earshot of the cabin, Dick turned to Lucy why he was there, and that there was to be an attack on the British garrison at Stony Point that night. "I will lead my 'Liberty Boys' in the charge up the hill," he said, "and as it is possible that I may be killed and never see you again, I will say good-by, Lucy."

Dick took the girl's hand and pressed it warmly. The girl was silent and seemed to be thinking fast. Presently she drew a long breath, like a sigh, and then held her face to him. "You have saved me from that scoundrel, Dick," she said, softly, "and if—if you wish, I may—may kiss me!"

Dick bent and kissed the warm, red lips. "Little sister!" he murmured; "no matter where I go, Lucy, I shall always remember what a brave, noble girl you are."

"Oh, Dick—my—brother!" The words came in almost a wail, and had Dick been better versed in affairs of the heart he would have understood, but he was not very well versed in such matters, and when an instant later Lucy lifted her head and laughed, he thought she was happy because he had called her "little sister." Had he been skilled in reading the human voice he would have detected the fact that the laugh was forced—but he wasn't skillful in this, especially as regarded girls' voices.

"And now you had better start for home, Lucy," said Dick. "Can you ride the major's horse, do you think?"

"Oh, yes; he seemed to be very gentle—and I am a good rider, anyway."

"Good! Come, then, I will assist you to mount."

The girl went with him to where the major's horse was hitched, without a word, and stood silently by while the youth untied the halter strap. She permitted him to lift her into the saddle and then as she gathered up the bridle rein she said: "Surely this is not the—the last—last time we shall see each other, Dick?" The voice trembled in spite of its owner's efforts to prevent it.

"Not if I live through to-night, Lucy."

"Then I shall pray that you be spared, my—brother!" said the girl, a world of feeling in her tones. "Promise me that you will come and see me in the morning, Dick, and let me know how the attack turned out."

"I promise to come if I am alive, Lucy."

And this was what the girl would be most eager to know—whether or not he had gone through the affair alive.

A few more words, and then, with a trembling "good-by," Lucy rode away and Dick returned to the cabin.

The major sat on a stool, silent, sullen, while Sambo, with a grin on his sable face, sat opposite. He nodded toward the major as Dick entered, and said: "He done tried ter git me ter sot 'im free, boss."

"And you refused, eh? Good for you, Sambo! You shall not lose anything by your action."

"He will lose that wooly head of his!" growled the major. "He has been coming over to the Point and selling berries to the men, and I see now that that was only a blind, and that he was a spy; and the punishment for spies is instant death. As soon as——"

"You catch them," broke in Dick, coolly; "but you won't catch Sambo, so he need have no fears."

Dick spoke so confidently that the major was puzzled. "What do you mean?" he asked, eyeing Dick searchingly. "You will soon find out!" was the significant reply.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAPTURE OF STONY POINT.

Dick remained at the cabin till about half-past nine o'clock, and then after binding the major's legs so that he could not leave the cabin, the youth, in company with the negro, took his departure.

They made their way toward the north a distance of a mile or so, and there waited patiently for the coming of the patriot force under "Mad" Anthony Wayne.

They waited more than an hour, and then the patriots put in an appearance and Dick and Sambo came out from among the trees at the side of the road and halted them. Dick went to the general and told him he had been successful.

"I have the countersign," he said; "and here is the colored man himself. He is true blue, and says he will go ahead of us and engage the sentinel at the causeway in conversation and then a couple of us can slip up and make the redcoat a prisoner without any trouble or raising an alarm. After that it will be a simple matter."

"Good! you have done well, Dick!" exclaimed General Wayne; "take the lead and guide us, as you know the way and we don't."

Dick and Sambo fell in in front and led the way. They continued southward till due west from Stony Point, and then turned east. Half a mile in this direction and then Dick told the general that the army had better halt and wait till after the sentinel had been disposed of. "It is only about a quarter of a mile to the causeway leading across the morass," he explained.

"Very well; take another man and go with the negro and make a prisoner of the sentinel," said Anthony. "Don't let the sentinel give the alarm, even if you have to kill him."

"I don't think it will be necessary to do that. We can secure him without letting him give the alarm."

"Very well."

Dick selected Bob, the "Liberty Boys" being in the front ranks, right at hand, and in company with Sambo they stole forward. When they reached the mainland end of the

causeway, Dick and Bob paused and the negro walked onward alone, humming a negro melody. He had brought his basket with some berries in it, at Dick's suggestion, and he had no difficulty in approaching the sentinel, he having visited the fort on many former occasions. As soon as Sambo had reached the sentinel and engaged him in conversation, the youths stole forward across the causeway with noiseless steps, and as the night was cloudy, there was no danger that they would be seen; there would not have been any danger had it been lighter, however, for Sambo had walked around until he was facing toward the direction from which the youths were coming, and the sentinel, in keeping his face toward the negro, had his back toward Dick and Bob. They were thus enabled to slip right up behind him, and the first he knew that danger threatened was when he felt Dick's iron-like fingers compressing his throat. He tried to cry out but could not, and he was quickly bound and gagged.

Then Bob hastened back and told the general that the coast was clear, and the patriot force stole forward. The causeway was crossed without the garrison having become alarmed, and then, forming in two divisions and with shoulder to shoulder, with unloaded muskets and fixed bayonets, the brave men pressed forward up the steep slope.

"Mad Anthony" headed one of the forces, and just behind him were the "Liberty Boys." Indeed, Dick was beside the general and both held swords in their hands. Onward, up the hill, they pressed, being as silent as possible, and they had almost reached the first line of fortifications before their coming was discovered by the sentinel. He at once gave the alarm, and an instant later the British opened fire. In the darkness, however, the shots were not very effective. Certain it is that the shots had no effect upon the advancing host. The patriot soldiers pressed forward steadily, silently, grimly.

Onward and upward they went. They leaped over the first stone wall and continued on their way. Suddenly a cry of pain escaped the lips of "Mad Anthony."

"I am wounded!" he exclaimed. "A couple of you men come and support me and I will continue onward and die at the head of the column!"

Two of the "Liberty Boys" leaped forward and supported the general on either side. No halt was made whatever, and assisted by the youths the general was enabled, even though severely wounded, to continue on in advance of his men.

As they drew near the summit of the hill the patriot soldiers increased their pace. It was a desperate charge, indeed, and Dick led his "Liberty Boys" in the rush up

time he gazed searchingly into Joe Farrell's face. "Joe," he said suddenly, "you love Lucy yourself. Is it not so?"

Joe flushed. "Yes, it is true, Dick," he replied; "I do love her, but I knew it would do no good for me to try to win her if you cared for her, so I made up my mind to ask you."

"I'm glad you did, old fellow; and now if you wish to make me your friend for life, go to work and make Lucy Logan love you. She is a splendid girl, and I want her to be happy."

"I'll do my best, Dick, you may be sure of that."

"Do! And now, good-by, my boy, and success to you!"

Then Dick shook hands with Joe and rode onward, leaving the youth the happiest fellow in New York.

"I'll win her," he said to himself in grim determination; "I'll make her forget Dick and learn to love me, if such a thing is possible."

Three days later the patriot army withdrew from Stony Point and returned to West Point, taking the prisoners, the cannon and stores with them. Of course, they destroyed all the fortifications before evacuating Stony Point.

The British under Sir Henry Clinton came up the river and took possession of Stony Point, but they did not dare

come on up and make an attack on West Point. The bold and desperate stroke of the patriots in capturing the first garrison that had occupied Stony Point caused them to have a wholesome respect for the prowess of the brave men who were fighting for their liberty.

THE END.

The next number (59) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' JUSTICE, AND HOW THEY DEALT IT OUT," by Harry Moore.

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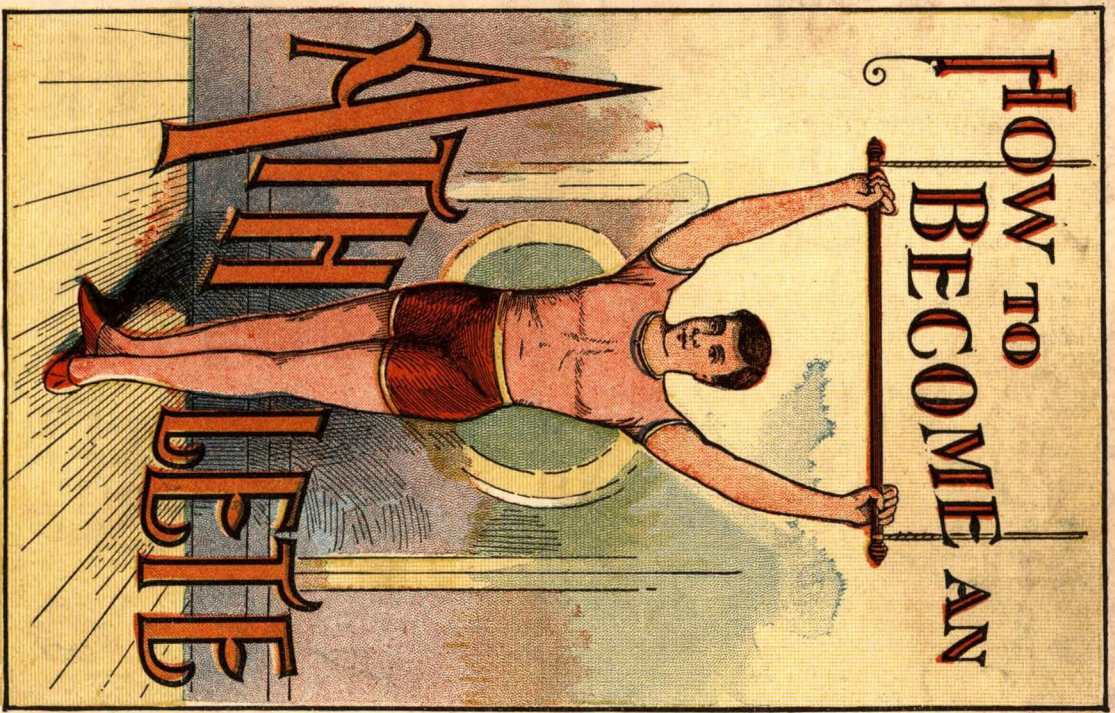
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